

UNTITLED-STRUCTURES
MCA
Museum of
Contemporary Art
May 17 –
Aug 31, 2014

Chicago, United States

www.untitled-structures.info

UNTITLED (STRUCTURES)

MCA, MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART CHICAGO

17 May — 31 August 2014

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The two-channel video installation *Untitled (Structures)* by Leslie Hewitt (American, b. 1977) and Bradford Young (American, b. 1977) is comprised of a series of silent vignettes, filmed at sites connected to the Civil Rights movement and the struggle for racial equality in the United States. Inspired by an archive of Civil Rights-era photographs at the Menil Collection in Houston, Hewitt and Young visited locations in Memphis, Arkansas, as well as here in Chicago, where these iconic photographs were taken. Many of the buildings and urban landscapes seem unremarkable today, the signs of their past significance at risk of being forgotten. Hewitt and Young look at these sites closely but present them without nostalgia. As Hewitt explains, "We were like urban archaeologists, finding traces of history in the density of contemporary life." From this point of departure, the film meditates on the resonance of history in the present day as the defining events of the past grow more distant.

Hewitt, a New York-based artist, is concerned with how photographs convey time, create meaning, and shape understandings of history. Bradford, a cinematographer, has been described by *The New York Times* as "one of a cadre of emerging black filmmakers... making visually compelling cinema addressing the outliers at the edges of black culture in America." *Untitled (Structures)* marks a point of convergence between film and photography—the media in which the two artists often work. The film hovers at the border between still and moving images, mimicking the stillness and silence of photographs as the camera fixes steadily on different spaces. Within each frame, however, are hints of motion: lights flicker in an empty room or a young man or woman blinks as he or she stands still.

Untitled (Structures) was commissioned by the Menil Collection with support from the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and the Des Moines Art Center. This presentation is organized by Naomi Beckwith, Marilyn and Larry Fields Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago.

Funding

Support for MCA Screen: Leslie Hewitt in collaboration with Bradford Young is provided in part by Linda Johnson Rice, Bernard Lumpkin and Carmine Boccuzzi, and Cheryl Mayberry McKissack and Eric McKissack.

ARTIST TALK: AUGUST 23, 2014

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Organized by Naomi Beckwith,
Marilyn and Larry Fields
Curator