

**Abigail DeVille: Homebody**

March 20 – May 1, 2021

Andrew Edlin Gallery is pleased to present *Homebody*, an installation by Abigail DeVille. DeVille's body of work is centered around the cosmologies of marginalized people and places. *Homebody* explores the legacy of homemaking and displacement through her family's experiences in the Great Migration. In the 1930s, DeVille's family moved north from Richmond, Virginia, landing first in Harlem and later, in the 1950s, the Bronx. This project was inspired as a dialogue with the gallery's concurrent show, *Shacks and Legends, 1985-2011*, a solo exhibition by Beverly Buchanan (1940-2015), which is presented in the adjacent space. Like DeVille's family, Buchanan moved north, living intermittently in New York and New Jersey before settling in Ann Arbor, Michigan. In her constructions, works on paper, and photographs, she evokes the Southern vernacular architecture inspired by her childhood and her later travels through rural parts of the Carolinas and Georgia.

Buchanan's shack dwellings were created as meditations on the rural South's houses and the architects, artisans, caretakers, and growers who inhabited them. Critic and curator Lucy Lippard describes Buchanan's process: "With scavenged scraps of tin, stone, cardboard, and old wood that might have come from the very bodies of the collapsing buildings themselves, she revitalizes the lives of those who lived in her 'shacks.'...Like the concrete of her public sculptures, they are a testament to survival, her own, and all of the unknown Americans that have been shunted off to the margins of hardship and isolation. Though they often made up for it with flowers in their yards, the people who lived in these dwellings could not usually afford to paint their homes. So sometimes Buchanan does it for them."

Looking through the windows of Buchanan's constructions, DeVille saw her grandmother's house, the Bronx apartment that four generations of her family called home from the 1950s through 2012. In *Homebody*, DeVille pays homage to her history. Using various materials, including personal keepsakes, she meditates on the meanings left behind in the apartment's fragments. *Bronx Floors (1970-2012)* is made of floor tiles laid down by DeVille's great-grandmother in 1970, which the artist removed in 2012; *Archive Wakes, 2009-2021*, features silent films and documents relating to the mysteries and secret movements of ancestors from the rural South to the urban North; and in *Roots (Quercus virginiana), 2021*, artificial tree roots grow underneath the apartment floor, resembling Southern live oak and comparable to the Georgia heart pine commonly found in Buchanan's sculptures and Southern rural homes.

Abigail DeVille was born in New York, NY in 1981. DeVille is known for her site-specific installations and large-scale sculptures, including *Light of Freedom (2020)*, commissioned by Madison Square Park Conservancy. A response to history and current events, *Light of Freedom* reflects the despair and the exultation in this turbulent period of pandemic and

protest. With a timeworn bell—a herald of freedom—and the arms of mannequins, beseeching viewers, it references the Statue of Liberty's arm and torch that were exhibited in Madison Square Park from 1876 to 1882. *Light of Freedom* is on view at The Momentary, a satellite contemporary art space of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas, from March 25 - September 26, 2021, and at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC., from October - April 2022. A concurrent exhibition to *Homebody*, *Brand New Heavies*, will open at Pioneer Works, Brooklyn on April 2<sup>nd</sup>.

DeVille's exhibitions include *The American Future PICA*, Portland, OR (2018); *Empire State Works in Progress*, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY (2017); and *No Space Hidden (Shelter)*, ICA LA, Los Angeles, CA (2017). She has received the United States Artists Fellowship (2018), the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Grant (2018), the Chuck Close/Henry W. and Marion T. Mitchell Rome Prize (2017-2018), an OBIE Award for Design (sets & costumes) for *Prophetika: An Oratorio* at LaMaMa (2015), the Creative Capital Visual Artist Award (2015), The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study Fellowship (2014-2015), a Rema Hort Mann Foundation Emerging Artist Grant (2014), and the Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant (2012). She has also been an Artist in Residence at the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation (2017) and the Studio Museum of Harlem (2013-2014). DeVille received a BFA from the Fashion Institute of Technology (2007) and an MFA from Yale University (2011).