

Press Release

ZOLLAMT<sup>MMK</sup>, open from Wednesday, 2 May 2021

## JA'TOVIA GARY THE GIVERNY SUITE



Image: Ja'Tovia Gary, *The Giverny Suite*, 2019, film still, © Ja'Tovia Gary, courtesy of Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

To occupy the venues of art history and introduce new imagery to them is one of art's *raison d'être*. An image is always an expression of a specific perspective, way of thinking, and present. In her work *The Giverny Suite* (2019), Ja'Tovia Gary shows the extent to which not only images, but also how we see them, are subject to ideological influences. In the iconic landscapes of Claude Monet, Gary stages the collision between idyll and imperialism. Against the background of this total construction of nature, the Black female body appears to be protected by the usual exoticizing gaze. Yet in view of the blatantly asymmetrical power structure, the figure of the *négresse* in the film adopts a transgressive position. In interviews conducted on the streets of Harlem, the omnipresent vulnerability is every bit as palpable as the strong, warm sense of connectedness among Black women and girls.

Images of self-empowerment—for example of Nina Simone during her concert in Montreux or of the Black Panther activist Fred Hampton—clash with film footage of Josephine Baker as a caged bird, shots of drone strikes carried out in Afghanistan under the tenure of Barack Obama with the film sequences Diamond Reynolds took with her cell phone following the fatal shooting of her partner Philando Castile during a police traffic stop in Minnesota. All these many images seem to merge in the question posed by Joseline Hernandez: “Can I live? Can I live? Can I fucking live?”

The first institutional solo exhibition to feature the artist Ja'Tovia Gary in Europe, the show will take place at the ZOLLAMT<sup>MMK</sup> within the framework of the photography Triennial RAY 2021.

Press photos

Press photos can be downloaded here  
[www.mmk.art/en/about/press](http://www.mmk.art/en/about/press)

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The ZOLLAMT<sup>MMK</sup> is supported by:

**Jürgen Ponto-Stiftung  
zur Förderung junger Künstler**