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CHECKLIST

Pablo Delano, Puerto Rican, born 1954
Sevilla House, Former Home of Manager of Operations for Tate & Lyle Sugar Company, Brechin Castle Sugar Estates, Trinidad, West Indies, 2012
Pigment print [UltraChrome K3 inks] on Inkpress paper
Purchased through the Elizabeth and David C. Lowenstein '67 Fund; 2013.40.1

Ólafur Eliasson, Icelandic-Danish, born 1967
Your House, 2006
Hand-bound book
Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth College:
Gift of Karen and Daphne Davidson; Rauner Presses L559ely

Justin Kimball, American, born 1961
South Street, from the series *Pieces of String*, 2013
Color photograph
Gift of Richard S. and Jeanne Press; 2013.44.2

Henry Koerner, American, born Austria, 1915–1991
Street in Berlin, 1945–47
Opaque watercolor mounted on [Cadat] illustration board
Gift of Thomas George, Class of 1940; W.958.349

Yinka Shonibare, English, born 1962
Doll House, Peter Norton Family Christmas Project, 2002
Resin, wood, fabric, ceramic
Gift of the Director of the Hood Museum of Art; S.2002.65

Bill Traylor, American, about 1854–1949
House with Figures and Animals (House with Figures; House with Figures and Snake), 1939
Colored pencil and graphite on cardboard
Purchased through the Florence and Lansing Porter Moore 1937 Fund; D.2003.53

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A Space for Dialogue, founded with support from the Class of 1948, is made possible with generous endowments from the Class of 1967, Bonnie and Richard Reiss Jr. '66, and Pamela J. Joyner '79.

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Bill Traylor, *House with Figures and Animals (House with Figures; House with Figures and Snake)*, 1939, colored pencil and graphite on cardboard. Purchased through the Florence and Lansing Porter Moore 1937 Fund; D.2003.53.

(RE)IMAGINING HOME



Henry Koerner, *Street in Berlin*, 1945–47, opaque watercolor mounted on [Cadat] illustration board. Gift of Thomas George, Class of 1940; W.958.349.

Home is a complex idea imbued with a variety of meanings and associations. This exhibition explores home as a mutable emotional and conceptual phenomenon inextricably linked to physical spaces, which are subject to a cycle of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction. Highly personalized, these spaces continually evolve as their inhabitants age or move, eventually replaced by new inhabitants or none at all. Homes are markers and souvenirs of personal narratives and inner lives. Whether actual or staged, physical or conceptual, idyllic or ruined, they are products of the imaginations of both those who construct and inhabit them and others who gaze upon them from the outside.

The unusual book form of Icelandic-Danish artist Ólafur Elíasson's *Your House* requires viewers to mentally organize, decipher, and move through the plurality of spaces seen as they flip the book's pages. Commissioned by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 2006, *Your House*

is composed of 454 hand-bound pages laser-cut to model the artist's own home on a miniature scale of 85:1. The "reader" conceptually occupies the home and imbues it with meaning and life, yet never sees the home in its entirety. The self-destructiveness of the book, which falls further into disrepair every time it is handled as edges catch, bend, and tear, emphasizes the fragility of domestic structures, seen in the tenuous relationship between tangibility and intangibility, materiality and immateriality, visibility and invisibility.

Yinka Shonibare's *Doll House* (commissioned in 2002 by the Peter Norton Family Christmas Project as their holiday gift of the year) similarly invites the imagination of viewers, on whom it depends for completion. The child's play of arranging the interior speaks to the personal fantasies that create the home within the house, which is a model of the artist's own Victorian townhouse in London. The constraints imposed by the household items available raise questions about how constructions of home and, by extension, identity are shaped by external factors, including limitations on resources, personal and familial histories, and the perceptions of others. Originally of Indonesian origin and introduced to Africa by the Dutch, the fabric covering the house's furniture, for example, has become a marker of "authentic" Africanness. This printed cloth speaks to the British-Nigerian artist's dual nationality and the creation of identities more generally.

Bill Traylor's graphic work *House with Figures and Animals* also speaks to the role of the imagination in constructing homes and the personal narratives that surround them. The dreamlike, somewhat surreal representation of a house and the surrounding scenes composed of invented forms create a conceptual, symbolic image. After moving away from the farm on which he was born and continued to live and work for decades after emancipation, Traylor began drawing in 1939. His graphic works on cardboard and other found materials were discovered posthumously. Here, his stylized birds, reminiscent of those on Yoruba staffs, correspond with African, Afro-Caribbean, and African American folk art and are thus suggestive of the complexities of African American identity. The flattened, brightly colored house with open doors suggests an interior that offers refuge from the disturbing scenes that take place outside.

Henry Koerner's painting *Street in Berlin* is another surreal reflection on home that calls on a particular social and political situation: the displacement, chaos, and destruction that reigned at the end of World War II. The homey interior of a bombed house lies in ruins, exposed to the elements. The structure is no longer a shelter, but a public display of its own vulnerability. It is a site of nostalgia, memory, and imagination. Fragments such as the vase of yellow flowers are vivid reminders of the former occupants. Next door, a woman scrubs the steps to her surviving home. At the threshold of interior and exterior, private and public, shelter and danger, she smiles. Her smile acts as an invitation into both

the uncanny painting and her home, offering refuge to viewers who are asked to construct narratives about the displaced inhabitants and reconstruct the broken landscape.

Deconstruction and re-imagination are also evoked in Pablo Delano's photograph *Sevilla House*. The title identifies the abandoned structure as a former home and references Trinidad's colonial era and long-lasting sugar industry. Even decades after its dissolution, the British sugar industry's exploitation of first enslaved locals and then, once slavery was abolished, Indian laborers leaves traces on the physical landscape, as well as in the political, economic, social, and other domains of society. The ruined structure is a reminder of a harrowing past that continues to haunt the paradise of the brightly colored, welcoming natural landscape that surrounds and invades its walls. The photograph calls for the recollection of a painful past and imagination of a better future.

The theme of abandonment is addressed again in *South Street*, one of Justin Kimball's photographs of a ghostly home whose resident has died. The unoccupied bed—arguably the most intimate object in a home, a place where people are born, copulate, conceive, give birth, die—is a raw allusion to the death of the former occupant. The bedroom's demise necessarily coincides with that of the deceased, whose presence defined and vitalized the space, and whose ethos lingers in the matching color of the walls and the flowers on the curtains. Whether the spirit of the deceased or the promise of change and new life, the breeze that blows in through the broken window offers consolation. Viewers are left to reconstruct the story of the deteriorating interior.

The images of homes on display, be they representations of existent, real, and/or functional house-like infrastructures, scenes of former homes in shambles, or dreamlike dwelling spaces, invoke the imagination. They come to life and take on meaning only once engaged on a conceptual and affective, personal level. The home is the product of the heart and mind. Nowhere is the fragility of the material home more visible than in the visual imagery of the abandoned, empty, or ruined home. Yet it is in these images of absence that the home's resilience in the (re)imagination is most apparent.

Elissa Watters '15
Levinson Intern

Justin Kimball, *South Street*, from the series *Pieces of String*, 2013, color photograph. Gift of Richard S. and Jeanne Press; 2013.44.2.

