

# CLAIRE OLIVER

513 West 26th Street, New York, NY 10001

Diggs & Hillel

*125th: Time in Harlem*

Large format photographs

October 24 - November 23, 2013

125th: Time in Harlem was conceived not as a political statement but as vehicle to invite discussion and investigate the role of Community in America today. Diggs and Hillel have trained their camera on Harlem's "paradox of place" during a time of profound transition; Harlem is confronting challenges of urban flux, gentrification, the loss of cultural memory and the preservation of community. The tension between the everyday reality of its streets - often contentious and always complex - and the cultural brand it has established in our collective imagination is inscribed in these Artists' large format photographs.

The works in this exhibition explore landscape and memory with concept and raw visceral content, creating pictures that expand our visual vocabulary. A generation apart, Diggs & Hillel see the neglected inner city in a new light: by combining the 'immediacy of moment' street photographers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson and Walker Evans used and the perfection of line only a large format camera can produce, the artists have created a new visual language. Their process, at once deliberate and spontaneous, reveals the same intensity of scrutiny to the Urban Landscape that Ansel Adams gave to the Rockies.

Discussing every detail of the concept behind each work beforehand, the Artists may wait hours for the perfect moment to pass before their lens, creating images that capture the gritty, yet beautiful, frenetic pace of the social landscape of Harlem. The photographs in "125th: Time In Harlem" depict the sites and relics that constitute tangible expressions of the community's desires, despairs and traditions.

A frenetic beehive of activity, Harlem teems with social encounter, family, faith, warmth, music, anger and frustration. 125th, Harlem's "main street" and the focus of the works in this exhibition, has seen countless historical events and iconic performances; musicians such as James Brown, Ella Fitzgerald and Michael Jackson have made the Apollo Theatre a worldwide icon. In 1935, it was on this street that the arrest of a 16- year-old Puerto Rican instigated the first American race riot, setting in motion the civil rights movement. When Fidel Castro came to New York in 1960, he stayed on 125th Street, meeting with Malcolm X and Langston Hughes. The historical significance of this American Community is hard to over emphasize; Diggs & Hillel have proffered much for the viewer to ponder.



Ink  
Archival pigment ink print on cotton rag paper  
50 x 40 in. | 2013



Farmacia  
Archival pigment ink print on cotton rag paper  
40 x 50 in. | 2013

Noted photography historian Vicki Goldberg wrote of these works: "Two men with a camera, thoughtfully observing the visual cacophony of one major thoroughfare and the complicated interplay of its history, its present, and the certainty of change, have laid the groundwork for a dialogue and a vision that reaches farther than human eyes can see. The result is an incredibly detailed look at Harlem that the Artists hope will not only affect how we see the neighborhood, but the world around us." Edward Hillel's works are in many important collections including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; The National Gallery, Czech Republic; and the Bibliotheque Nationale de France, Paris. His work has been exhibited at the International Center of Photography, New York City; Jeu de Paume, Paris; and The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; Isaac Diggs has works held in the permanent collections of the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and has exhibited at The Studio Museum in