



RASHOD TAYLOR: My America

A solo photographic exhibition addressing themes of family, culture, legacy, and the black experience.



Rashod Taylor, *The Future*, 2019, 40 x 30", archival pigment ink print from wet-plate collodion tintype, edition of 6.

Friday, September 23, 2022

Artist's Walk-Thru: 4pm

Reception with the Artist: 5-7pm

Exhibition is on view September 23 through November 20, 2022

Obscura Gallery is excited to present the solo exhibition, *My America*, by fine art portrait photographer Rashod Taylor. The exhibition includes his two poignant and sensitive projects, *Little Black Boy* and *My America*. Through "wet" darkroom printing methods including the 19th Century wet-plate collodion process, as well as the enlarging process on traditional gelatin silver paper, the artist uses portraiture to express themes of family, culture, legacy, and the black experience.

Artist Walk Thru and Reception at Obscura Gallery

September 23, 2022, 5-7pm with a gallery walk-thru preceding the reception at 4pm.

Online Zoom interview with Rashod Taylor

Saturday, September 17 at 10:00am MST.

Register here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8vorpwUXSaqepfRxXyVZ8w

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The intimate portrait series *Little Black Boy* centers on Rashod Taylor's son, LJ, examining from the photographer's own perspective both LJ's childhood and the world he navigates. Taylor's images reflect his unspoken anxiety over his son's well-being and his own fatherhood.



RASHOD TAYLOR, *LJ and his Fort*, 2020, 20 x 24", gelatin silver print, edition of 10.

Like many first-time fathers, Rashod Taylor began taking photographs of his son, LJ, when he was born. Eventually, though, he began to think there might be more to the photographs than family snapshots, and he began gently choreographing his (mostly) cooperative son in images that lovingly portray mundane moments from his life. The photographs, which sometimes include Taylor himself or his wife, are tender, intimate images of a Black family raising a Black boy in the United States. – excerpt from Photograph Magazine interview in May 2022 with Rashod Taylor by Jean Dykstra.

“At times I worry if he will be ok as he goes to school or as he plays outside with friends as children do. These feelings are enhanced due to the realities of growing up black in America. He can’t live a carefree childhood as he deserves; there is a weight that comes with his blackness, a weight that he is not ready to bear. It’s my job to bear this weight as I am accustomed to the sorrows and responsibility it brings- the weight of injustice, prejudices, and racism that has been interwoven in our society and institutional systems for hundreds of years. I help him through this journey of childhood as I hope one day this weight will be lifted.” – Rashod Taylor



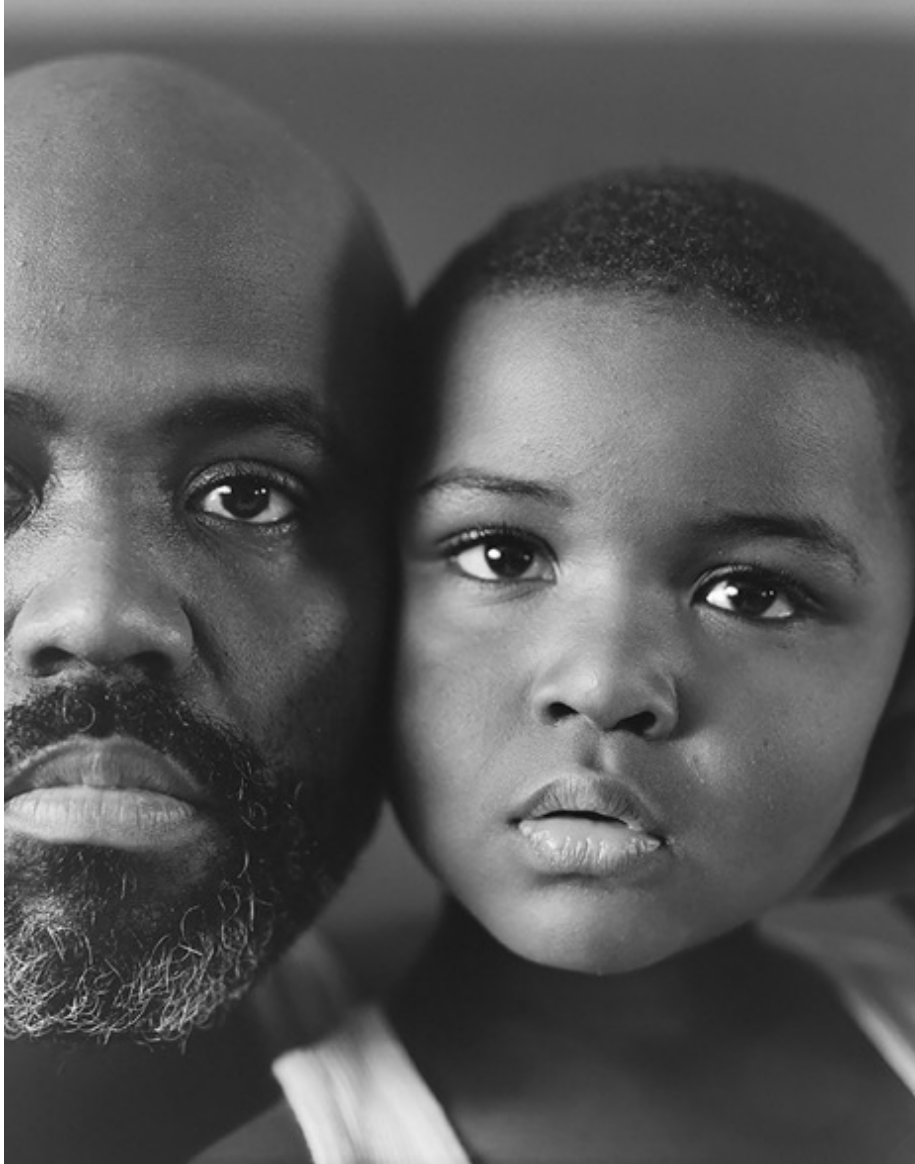
RASHOD TAYLOR, *Easter Sunday*, 2021, 20 x 24", gelatin silver print, edition of 10

"It's one of those things that while I am a very proud American and glad I live in this great country," Taylor said in a CNN interview on June 17, 2022, "but at the same time, it's almost like a daily struggle because you live in a place where people with black and brown skin are still not treated with the respect and dignity that they deserve."

Taylor says he wants America to view LJ like any other child who loves to swim, build forts, play soccer, video games and watch cooking shows. He's raising LJ to be an upstanding man who knows he is smart and strong, who treats others the way he wants to be treated. At the same time, Taylor said he will always remind LJ that he is Black. He will teach him to keep his hands on the steering wheel if he is ever pulled over by police and to avoid wearing hoodies when walking around at night. He sometimes thinks about Trayvon Martin and Tamir Rice -- two innocent, young Black boys who left home and never made it back to their parents. "There's this idea that I can lose him in an instant and I can't control that," Taylor said.



RASHOD TAYLOR, *Tired of Fighting*, 2020, 20 x 24", gelatin silver print, edition of 10



RASHOD TAYLOR, *Reflection of Me*, 2020, 20 x 24", gelatin silver print, edition of 10

Taylor grew up in a two-parent household and his father instilled many of the same values and lessons in him that he tries to instill in LJ. Taylor's biggest hope is that the burden which is placed on Black men and Black families will be lessened by the time LJ grows up and has his own children.



RASHOD TAYLOR, *Holding Hands*, 2020, 20 x 24", gelatin silver print, edition of 10

"I just hope people will look at the images and see a different point of view," Taylor said. "And develop empathy but even more than empathy ... something that will help enact change in them and their perception and how they look at my world and LJ's world."



RASHOD TAYLOR, *Prayer Hands*, 2021, 20 x 24", gelatin silver print, edition of 10

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RASHOD TAYLOR, *Never Let Go 2*, 2020, 20 x 24", gelatin silver print, edition of 10

Rashod's series, *My America*, is an examination of what it's like to live in America as a Black man shown through the process of wet-plate collodion tintypes. He says of the process, "The wet-plate collodion process dates back to the decade just before the start and end of the Civil War. I use this process to connect the past to the present, and to explore the atrocities of slavery, Jim Crow and the institutional and systematic racism that remains so tightly woven into the fabric of American society."



RASHOD TAYLOR, *Untitled*, 2019, 10 x 8", tintype, edition 1 of 1

"The American Dream is founded on the idea that equality of opportunity is accessible to all people, but it is a dream which continues to be out of reach for a majority of Black Americans. By capturing the Black America that I live every day, I hope to shed light on what people unfamiliar with Black lives either don't want to see, or refuse to acknowledge."

The wet-plate collodion process requires a metal or glass plate that is coated with collodion, the light-sensitive solution that allows for photographic exposure. While still wet, the plates are coated, sensitized, exposed and developed within about fifteen minutes. A photographer working in the field requires a portable darkroom for these processes. Although the overall experience can be delicate and cumbersome, it renders each plate_a one-of-a-kind art piece.



RASHOD TAYLOR, *The Past*, 2019, 10 x 8", tintype, edition 1 of 1

I took a workshop with Dale Bernstein, and I really I gravitated toward the [wet-plate] process. I also enjoy history; understanding that this was the second photographic process after daguerreotypes, and looking at Civil War images and images of families, there wasn't much representing Black people. It was expensive, and they couldn't afford it. The few images of Black people were from the war. It was an interesting time: Black people were allowed to fight even though they had no rights. And that's a theme in American history since then, into World War II, and Vietnam a little bit. So that was an interesting thread, and I love the fact that the wet plate dates back that far. – excerpt from Photograph Magazine interview in May 2022 with Rashod Taylor by Jean Dykstra.



RASHOD TAYLOR, *Glass*, 2019, 10 x 8", tintype, edition 1 of 1

Rashod Taylor attended Murray State University, receiving a Bachelor's degree in Art with a specialization in Fine Art Photography. Taylor has since exhibited and published not only nationally, but also internationally. Most recently, his *Little Black Boy* series was acquired by the Museum of Fine Arts Houston and received the 2021 Arnold Newman Prize For New Directions in Photographic Portraiture. In addition, he was also a 2020 Critical Mass Top 50 Finalist, winner of Lens Culture's Critics Choice award and a 2021 Feature Shoot Emerging Photography Awards winner.

Taylor's editorial clients include *National Geographic*, *The Atlantic*, *Essence Magazine* and *Buzzfeed News*, among others. His work has also been included in *CNN*, *Photograph Magazine*, *Feature Shoot* and *Lenscratch* among others.

Rashod Taylor lives in Springfield, MO, with his wife and son.

VIEW THE WORK IN THE EXHIBITION AT THE FOLLOWING LINK:

<https://www.obscuragallery.net/artwork/artists/rashodtaylor/>

CNN Interview: Photographs by Rashod Taylor

Story by Nicquel Terry Ellis, CNN

Published June 17, 2022

<https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2022/06/us/taylor-little-black-boy-father-son-cnnphotos/>

Photograph Magazine Interview: Rashod Taylor at Obscura Gallery

AIPAD Photography Show Edition

Interview by Jean Dykstra

Published May 21, 2022

<https://www.obscuragallery.net/news/page/3/>

For high resolution files and more information please contact:

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THE GALLERY LOCATION AND HOURS

Obscura Gallery is located in the Santa Fe downtown historic district two blocks east of the revitalized Downtown Railyard district. Gallery hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 11-5pm and by appointment.

Parking is limited. Additional parking is available Monday – Friday from 8:00am – 9:00pm at the State Capitol Parking Facility municipal garage located at 485 Galisteo Street. There is also metered parking always available on Galisteo street next to the Parking Facility.