



Noah Purifoy

Frieze Los Angeles
February 20 – 23, 2025

Tilton Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of work by Noah Purifoy (1917-2004), the Los Angeles legend whose work inspired the Hammer's most recent *Made in L.A.*, and whose Joshua Tree Outdoor Museum is an art world destination. This will be Purifoy's first exhibition in LA since his 2015 retrospective at LACMA. The gallery will present sculptural assemblages and collages, most never before exhibited in Los Angeles.

A pioneer in California assemblage and a key figure in the Black Arts Movement in LA during the 60s and 70s, Purifoy was also a community activist and Co-founder and Director of the Watts Towers Arts Center. He organized and made art from debris from the Watts Rebellion for the landmark exhibition *66 Signs of Neon*, first shown at local festivals before traveling in the U.S. and internationally. Long a mentor to fellow artists such as David Hammons and a friend and colleague of John Outterbridge and Betye Saar among many other artists, Purifoy's work now inspires a new generation of artists.

Purifoy believed in the power of art as a vehicle for communication. He served for ten years on the California Arts Council, supporting arts programs across the state, returning to LA in 1987 to continue to make art. In 1989 the artist moved to Joshua Tree where he created large outdoor sculptures as well as smaller assemblages from salvaged found objects. He lived there till his death in 2004. The gallery will present primarily examples

from this period in Joshua Tree. These unknown works expand our understanding of the breadth of Purifoy's late work, enriching the legacy of this enduring artist.

Noah Purifoy was born in 1917 in Snow Hill, Alabama and died in 2004 in Joshua Tree, California. He had a Bachelor of Science from the Alabama State Teachers College, a Master's in Social Service Administration from Atlanta University, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Chouinard Art Institute. His works are included in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the National Gallery of Art, the Smithsonian Archives of American Art in Washington D.C., the Hammer Museum, the Los Angeles County Museum, the California African American Museum in Los Angeles, and the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin among many others.

Purifoy's work was included in the travelling exhibition *Now Dig This! Art and Black Los Angeles 1960-1980* at the Hammer Museum and MoMA PS1 in 2011-12 and in *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power*, organized by the Tate Modern and travelled to five other venues in 2018-20, including the Broad in Los Angeles. He was given retrospectives in 1997 by The California African American Museum and in 2015 by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Both exhibitions are accompanied by in-depth catalogues. Extensive documentation on Purifoy can be found both in the *Now Dig This!* catalogue and in Tilton Gallery's *L.A. Object & David Hammons Body Prints*. Tilton Gallery included Purifoy's work in their exhibition of the same name in 2006. He has had solo shows at Tilton in 2018 and 2023.