

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

RICO GATSON

For Immediate Release: March 22, 2013

The Promise of Light

April 6 – May 18, 2013

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts presents new work by Rico Gatson. *The Promise of Light* is partly inspired by the book, *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson, which chronicles the black migration out of the American South spanning World War I through the early 1970's. Gatson's family undertook this journey, moving from Georgia to California in the late 60's for the promise of a new beginning. The "promise" is a reference to the intrinsic optimism of the distinctive California light, while alternately referencing the universal struggle inherent in striving toward idealized promise.

The transition from dark to light is represented conceptually and formally as the viewer moves through the exhibition. The first gallery consists of paintings from the *Watts* (2011) series and a large video projection also titled *The Promise of Light* (2013). The paintings are inspired by aerial photos taken during the Watts Riots in 1965 and are a distillation of the original photographs' energy. The predominant elements in each painting are fire, road, and horizon. The video combines footage of atmospheric light and sound layered upon graphic historic imagery. The light in the video is transitional, alluding to journey, transformation, and the passage of time.

The second gallery consists of sculptures, paintings, digital prints, and a multi-panel painting installation. The sculptures, *Magic Stick #15* and *#16* (2013), function as talismans symbolizing protection and good luck. Digital prints titled *Family* (2013) are composed of reworked images of members of Gatson's family in Georgia years before moving to California. A focal point in the exhibition is the multi-paneled painting installation, *Untitled (Collective Power)* (2013), which approximates African textiles and geometric abstraction with vibrant colors and pattern. The painting, *Obama* (2013), places the 44th president of the United States within the broader historical context of the exhibition.

Rico Gatson has been exhibited at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the New Museum of Contemporary Art, and MIT List Visual Arts Center and is in public and private collections including The Denver Art Museum, Norton Family Foundation, The Studio Museum in Harlem and Yale University.

A press kit with more information can be found at: <http://bit.ly/XhnWR7>

An opening reception will be held on Saturday, April 6 from 6-8. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10-6. Monday by appointment. For more information, contact Amy Silver at (212) 226-3232 or amy@feldmangallery.com.

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