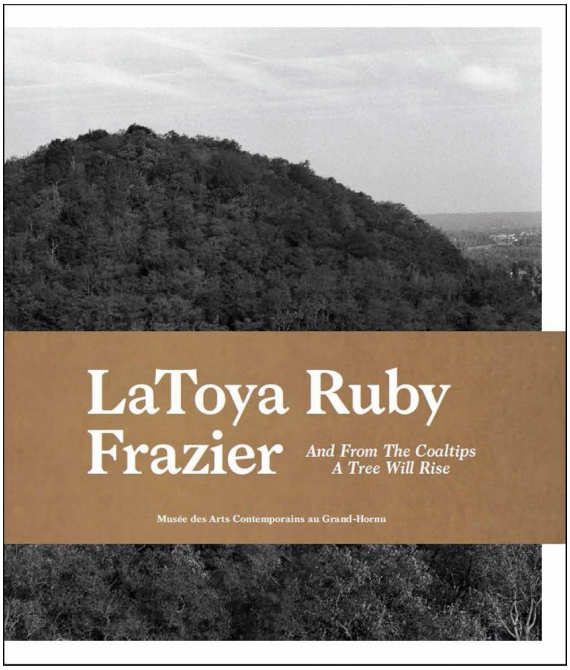
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LaToya Ruby Frazier

And From the Coaltips a Tree Will Rise

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- LaRoya Ruby Frazier bears witness to the impact of deindustrialisation on her Afro-American community by photographing three generations of women in her family
- LaToya is considered a must-see artist of her generation
- Text in English and French

LaToya Ruby Frazier grew up in Braddock, in the suburbs of Pittsburgh, at the heart of the Rust Belt. 'The Bottom' refers to the lower, poorest part of the town which is closest to the Edgar Thomson Plant, founded in 1872 by Andrew Carnegie. It was here that, aged sixteen, LaToya Ruby Frazier became aware of the need to bear witness to the impact of deindustrialisation on the Afro-American community. She did so by photographing her family through three generations of women (her grandmother, her mother and herself), along with the landscapes of this former flagship of the steel industry which had by then been abandoned. Braddock's recent history, forged by resurgent waves of unemployment, mounting poverty, demographic decline, the appearance of diseases, and hospital closures, are inscribed on the bodies and landscapes that LaToya Ruby Frazier juxtaposes in 'The Notion of Family'. Laying claim to the heritage of socio-documentary photography initiated by the FSA (Farm Security Administration), LaToya Ruby Frazier adds to this archive of working-class reality begun in the 1930s by Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Gordon Parks and others, capturing the town's and her own family's history from the inside – which is what makes her work unique. Her political engagement and struggle against social inequalities are revealed in her rigorous photographic framing. Given this conceptual aspect, her photography reaches far beyond what is strictly considered as documentation.

As she takes up her stand at MAC's, she has delved into the history of Borinage and the coal industry by meeting former miners and their families, to actively experience for herself what they have been through, by means of photographs of life. If the 'Notion of Family' series is anything to go by, this new exhibition could be seen as a prehistoric interpretation of Braddock's decline by the 1970s. It is through this return trip between the two works which convey the respective histories of Borinage and Braddock that the universal nature of the work of LaToya Ruby Frazier really comes out. Awarded the MacArthur Fellowship in 2015, LaToya Ruby Frazier is considered a must-see artist of her generation. She has exhibited in the United States and France. Her work is seen in many museums and private collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, The Carnegie Museum of Art and the Pinault Collection.

Text in English and French.

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