# INTERNATIONAL ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

## Zoë Charlton
*The Homestead*

**Summer 2018 International Artist-in-Residence**
**In residence May 16 > July 23, 2018**
**On view July 19 > September 9, 2018**

Zoë Charlton (Baltimore, MD) creates drawings that explore the ironies of contemporary social and cultural stereotypes. She received her MFA degree from the University of Texas at Austin and participated in residencies at Artpace (TX), the McColl Center for Art + Innovation (NC), the Skowhegan School of Painting (ME), and the Patterson Residency at the Creative Alliance (MD). Her work has been included in national and international exhibitions including The Delaware Contemporary (DE), the Harvey B. Gantt Center (NC), Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art (AR), Studio Museum of Harlem (NY), Contemporary Art Museum (TX), the Zacheta National Gallery of Art (Poland), and Haas & Fischer Gallery (Switzerland). She is a recipient of a Pollock-Krasner grant (2012) and Rubys grant (2014) and was a finalist for the 2015 Janet & Walter Sondheim Prize. She received nominations in 2014 for both the Anonymous Was a Woman and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Award. She is the co-founder of 'sindikit, an artist project space in Baltimore, MD and is a councilor on the Maryland State Arts Council. Charlton is an Associate Professor in the Department of Art at American University in Washington, DC.

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# ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

**How do you represent issues of gentrification and displacement in your work?**

At Artpace, I've worked on two distinct, yet narratively connected bodies of work. In my studio, I have three large-scale drawings/collages that are inspired by my family history. On the Artpace rooftop is a to-scale replica of my grandmother's house, which was located on Paul Russell Road in Tallahassee. When she passed away, her children sold her property to a developer who built a gated suburban community on the land. A part of the city that was once considered 'country' had become prime property for developers. Though my family wasn't displaced, the purchase and redevelopment of the former homestead made me think about gentrification and its impact on community.

Gentrification, displacement, and neighborhood renewal affects communities differently, especially neighborhoods that have historically not had access to city resources. In *Paul Russell Road*, the homestead has been created from memory and photographs, and is turned onto its roof, exposing a homogenous suburban neighborhood of ranch houses and bungalows, symbolizing the shift in property ownership from a single family to a housing estate. My original intention was for the house to be installed outside of Artpace in the San Antonio community. However, for a variety of reasons, at the county level, this work could not be installed where we intended. The neighborhood we initally chose has been impacted by the very concerns the artwork critiques.

**The origin of much of your work is your grandmother and the land she owned. Why is this part of your family history so impactful for you?**

I frequently draw nude bodies—often, a corpulent black female figure—as isolated figures on a white ground. Their relationship with the world is signified by the colorful adornments they wear and the culturally loaded objects they embrace—among them, southern landscapes, suburban housing and sports gear.

My current drawings are populated with trees and nature to give context to the body and its relationship to a particular kind of landscape. In the large-scale collages produced at Artpace, I depict landscapes growing out of women's bodies. This dense, lush landscape references my grandmother's homestead and the land she owned during a time when women, let alone Black women, did not own property. That homestead was a place that family lived, visited, and held meetings for generations.

**Tell us about your imaging process from stickers and drawing to large-scale, complex murals.**

I source much of my imagery from what already exists. I use stickers, which generally have a decorative function, to narrate in my drawings. The playfulness of the stickers becomes more surprising and absurd, with a shift in scale. Stickers function as visual shorthand. The way an image is generated brings content – both in the form of the images and its style. For instance, I collage trees using multiple styles of stickers – photographic, illustrative, painterly, etc. This conflation of styles alters how these images are read. Neither the images nor the styles in which they are made are value-free.