

# REGEN PROJECTS

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Regen Projects is pleased to announce representation of **Sable Elyse Smith**.

Working in video, sculpture, photography, and text-based artworks, Smith draws attention to American systems of inequity. Her work focuses on the largely unseen personal, political, and quotidian impact that state-funded penal, educational, and economic structures have on culture at large. Smith makes this visible by recontextualizing materials, symbols, forms, and value systems from these bureaucratic programs to make new meaning.

Taking the form of appropriations of ready-made objects, images, video, or text, Smith's practice adopts that which can be presumed to be neutral or banal—realigning it with issues surrounding memory, violence, trauma, and systemic inequality. Her work *Riot I*, 2019, is composed of a group of standard-issue stools designed for prison visiting rooms. Joined together at the center, the round seats jut outward radially, like a toy jack, rendering the design playful, yet functionless. In so doing, Smith heightens a core feature of correctional infrastructure, which is designed to be, first and foremost, prohibitive. In *Spread*, 2019, informal economic systems come up against official units of currency. A cement base supporting a stack of instant ramen noodles—a coveted prison good—faces a scale stacked with dollar bills equal to its inflated prison value. In aligning two systems of currency (the dollar and the ramen packet) which at first appear to have little connection, Smith reveals the ways in which the familiar becomes transformed within the carceral system. For another series, Smith appropriates the pages of a coloring book designed to teach children about the judicial process. Smith exaggerates the qualities and intention of the coloring-book pages, blowing them up to large scale and adding bright child-like scribbles. This jarring contrast between childlike innocence and the vexed legacy of the judicial system prods viewers to question how seemingly innocuous language and images work to reify injustice in America.



Shaun Caley Regen states, “I am honored to be able to work with Sable Elyse Smith. We are excited to present her poignant work that speaks so eloquently to systems of injustice and trauma with poetic aplomb and great formal beauty. It will be a pleasure to present her first solo exhibition in Los Angeles at Regen Projects in 2023, and to support the work going forward. This is an exciting moment for Sable and her ambitious projects, which will be presented in numerous institutional shows this upcoming year. Rarely have I seen work that is so emotive and revelatory of systemic injustice and what that space feels like.”

**Sable Elyse Smith** (b. 1986, Los Angeles, CA) lives and works in New York. She received a BA from Oglethorpe University in Atlanta and an MFA from Parsons School of Design, New York.

Smith's work was recently on view in *Marking Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration* at Abrams-Engel Institute for the Visual Arts (AEIVA) in Birmingham, AL (2021), which traveled from MoMA PS1, Queens (2020). Last year, Smith was also included in *Grief and Grievance: Art and Mourning in America* at the New Museum, New York. Her institutional solo shows include those at the Haggerty Museum in Milwaukee (2018) and the Queens Museum (2017).

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Smith was a 2018/2019 artist-in-residence at The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York. Her work has been included in numerous group exhibitions at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2021); New Museum, New York (2019, 2021); The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2019); High Line, New York (2018); Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (2018); SITE Santa Fe (2018); El Museo Del Barrio, New York (2017); and Socrates Sculpture Park, Queens (2016); among others. She has performed at the New Museum, New York (2019, 2015, and 2012); The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2018); The Poetry Project, New York (2017); MoMA Pop Rally, New York (2017); Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, New York (2017); and Queens Museum (2014); among others.

Her work is part of the permanent collections of numerous public institutions including The Brooklyn Museum; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; and the Haggerty Museum of Art, Milwaukee; among others. Her first monograph, published by JTT, Regen Projects, and ELLA, will be released in 2022.

For all press inquiries, please contact Elizabeth Gartner at +1 310 276 5424 or [elizabeth@regenprojects.com](mailto:elizabeth@regenprojects.com).

For all other inquiries, please contact Jennifer Loh, Stephanie Dudzinski, or Bryan Barcena at Regen Projects.

**Image:** *Riot I*, 2019. Stainless steel with 2k painted finish, 56 x 56 x 56 inches