



# Articulate

MEMORIAL ART GALLERY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER

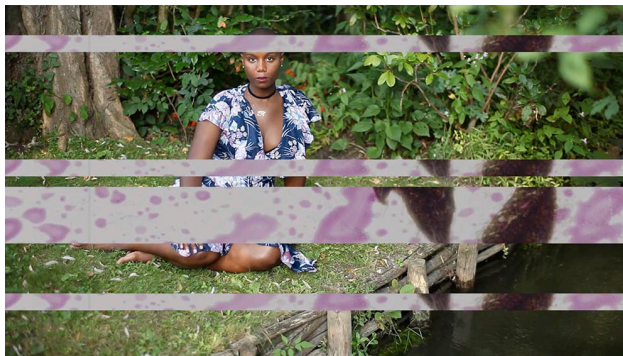
DECEMBER 2019 / JANUARY 2020

**REFRESH:**  
CONTEMPORARY ART IN THE GALLERIES

**DE'VIA:**  
THE MANIFESTO COMES OF AGE  
**JATOVIA GARY:**  
GIVERNNY I (NEGRESSE IMPÉRIALE)

# JA'TOVIA GARY: *GIVERNY I (NÉGRESSE IMPÉRIALE)*

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The latest Media Arts Watch gallery installation features Ja'Tovia Gary, an artist and filmmaker whose work challenges the ways in which visual and media cultures shape our perceptions around race, gender, and specifically Blackness. Her poignant and distinctive visual language combines documentary elements, direct animation, and archival footage.

Gary created *Giverny I (NÉGRESSE IMPÉRIALE)* during a 2016 residency at Claude Monet's historic gardens in France as part of the prestigious Terra Summer Fellowship for emerging filmmakers, scholars, and artists. While in this bucolic setting, surrounded by the ponds and water lilies that inspired Monet's celebrated late paintings, Gary learned about the Pulse nightclub shooting in Florida, as well as the deaths of Philando Castile in Minnesota and Alton Sterling in Louisiana by police gunfire. *Giverny I (NÉGRESSE IMPÉRIALE)* reflects on the contrast between these tragic events, the luxury of the garden, and the vulnerability of Gary's own body.

***"I was at a residency in Giverny when the murders of Philando Castile, Alton Sterling and the shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida happened. I'm in this garden in northern France, in the lap of [...] luxury, losing it a little, no shade. I'm the only Black person there. I was feeling my own body's vulnerability. When people ask me what this is about, I say it's about Black women's bodily integrity, or the lack thereof."***

*Giverny I (NÉGRESSE IMPÉRIALE)* interweaves images of Monet's garden with excerpts from Diamond Reynolds' Facebook live recording of the death of her boyfriend, public school worker Philando Castile. Other archival footage features slain activist and Black Panther Party leader Fred Hampton discussing the concept of "Negro Imperialism," as well as the importance of political education in organizing efforts towards liberation. As Gary explains, her work recontextualizes archival images to show how connections between colonialism, state violence, and media inform visual perception.

In 2017 Gary was one of *Filmmaker Magazine's 25 New Faces of Independent Filmmaking*. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Art, Design, & Architecture Museum, UC Santa Barbara, and the Studio Museum of Harlem.

MAG visitors will have the opportunity to meet Ja'Tovia Gary and learn about her work at a public event that will take place in the spring of 2020.

**IMAGE ABOVE:** Ja'Tovia Gary, Still from *Giverny I (NÉGRESSE IMPÉRIALE)*, 2017. Single-channel video, stereo sound, HD and SD video footage, 1920 x 1080, 16:9 aspect ratio, 6 minutes, looped, color/black & white, Edition of 5, 2 APs Directed, edited and animated by Ja'Tovia Gary. © Ja'Tovia Gary. Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery, New York.

\*: Hernandez, J. (2019, February 20). *Artist Ja'Tovia Gary and Her Films Are a Force to be Reckoned With*. Retrieved from [culturedmag.com/jatovia-gary/](https://culturedmag.com/jatovia-gary/).