THE SHELLEY & DONALD RUBIN FOUNDATION PRESENTS

THE SUPPER CLUB
A SOLO EXHIBITION BY ELIA ALBA

Opening Reception, Thursday, September 21 from 6 to 8pm
September 21, 2017 - January 12, 2018
The 8th Floor, 17 West 17th Street, NYC

Elia Alba, *The Thespian (Wanda Raimundi-Ortiz)*, 2014. Archival pigment print.

New York, New York, July 6, 2017 -- The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation is pleased to present ***Elia Alba: The Supper Club***, a solo exhibition focused on racial politics and visual culture, on view from **September 21, 2017 through January 12, 2018, at The 8th Floor**. Curated by Sara Reisman, Executive and Artistic Director of The

Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, ***The Supper Club*** is comprised of three components: an ongoing series of socially-engaged dinners, an exhibition of 60 photographic portraits of the artists who participated in the dinner conversations, and a book scheduled for publication in 2018.

The project began in the summer of 2012 with Elia Alba photographing a group of artists of color: David Antonio Cruz, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Las Hermanas Iglesias (Lisa and Janelle Iglesias), Lina Puerta, and Mickalene Thomas. These were followed by a series of dinner conversations that engaged fifty artists of color to "give voice" to members of Alba's artist community. There have since been 25 dinners that have explored themes like Baltimore, Race, and Identity (in honor of Freddy Gray); the 2016 shootings in Orlando and the need for sanctuary spaces; Black Female Subjectivity; Black Male Subjectivity; and Racial Subjugation in Latin American History. The series of portraits of the dinner guests, at the core of the exhibition, were inspired by *Vanity Fair* magazine's annual "Hollywood Issue" and feature the guests in locations and costumes that capture their unique voices, transforming their identities into iconic images.

The Supper Club takes its cue from the *Vanity Fair* "Hollywood Issue" while critiquing the issue's historic lack of diversity. Alba's portraits assert the importance of communities of color that have contributed to visual culture while maintaining the complex nature of identity. According to Alba, "Portraiture has played an important role throughout the history of art in defining the political and social climate of the day… Creating sets, costumes, and at times traveling to specific locations, these portraits combine the visual vocabulary of contemporary fashion photography, with pop art and history…the photographs convey a deeper meaning or vision of the sitter, through their art."

The exhibition will be accompanied by a program series including ***The Supper Club*** dinners and other food-based, discursive events that will draw connections between Alba's project and the work of other socially-engaged artists. ***The Supper Club*** project will culminate in the forthcoming book which will feature the portraits accompanied by excerpts from the dinner conversations, developed in collaboration with writer and curator Nicole Caruth. In bringing this group of emerging and established artists of color literally to the table, ***The Supper Club*** counters the marginalization that has long prevented artists of color from engaging from a place of agency. Collectively, the project is a multi-faceted record of several generations of artists of color working in and around New York City, engaging an artistic community with wide-ranging ideas about racial politics and one's role within them.

About the Artist

Elia Alba was born in New York City. She received her BA from Hunter College in 1994 and completed the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Program in 2001. Her work has been exhibited at Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; El Museo del Barrio, New York; RISD Museum, Providence; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Science Museum, London; ITAU Cultural Institute, São Paulo; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; and the 10th Havana Biennial. Awards include Studio Museum in Harlem Artist-in-Residence program; LMCC Workspace Program; New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship; Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant; and Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant. Her work is in the collection of the Lowe Art Museum, Coral Galbes; El Museo del Barrio, New York; and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC, among others.

Special thanks to the Third Street Artist-in-Residence Program, Lafayette College, The AKS Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation through Lafayette College

About The Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation
The Foundation believes in art as a cornerstone of cohesive, resilient communities and greater participation in civic life. In its mission to make art available to the broader public, in particular to underserved communities, the Foundation provides direct support to, and facilitates partnerships between, cultural organizations and advocates of social justice across the public and private sectors. Through grantmaking, the Foundation supports cross-disciplinary work connecting art with social justice via experimental collaborations, as well as extending cultural resources to organizations and areas of New York City in need. sdrubin.org

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