



WAVE HILL SUNROOMPROJECTSPACE

September 10–October 23, 2022

AMINA ROSS

I am under the rock the rock is higher than I

AMINA ROSS

Lives in Brooklyn, NY

I am under the rock the rock is higher than I, 2022

Sculptural, video installation

Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

New York Community Trust Van Lier Fellow Amina Ross creates videos, sculptures, sound installations and situations to examine systems of power and to develop survival strategies for Black, queer, trans and femme communities. In *I am under the rock the rock is higher than I*, Ross constructs a multisensory environment comprising reclaimed materials, video and experimental audio, all in dialogue with the architecture of the space, and particularly the arched windows. Extending their interest in "the underground" from their recent work *Man's Country*, about a former, queer bathhouse, Ross's project develops a realm for marginalized figures to exist and thrive in safety and to exercise agency. Negotiating vulnerability and resiliency, Ross draws connections with spirituality and subterranean networks in the natural world.

During Wave Hill's 2022 Winter Workspace, Ross explored the intersections of their digital, performance, text and sound-based practice and how these aspects of their practice relate to the soil. Ross contemplates being a part of the land—"beneath the earth and made of earth"—rather than extracting from it or overlooking it. Guided by the belief that the land holds memories, emotions and histories, the artist's exhibition investigates cultural and social politics. Both physical and metaphorical in form, soil is often conflated with the idea of lowness—a term that is associated with inferiority or neglect—and Ross seeks to subvert these preconceived notions.

The exhibition title is inspired by a West Indian spiritual that celebrates being hidden or invisible as participants break out in song. This concept is explored in the sound installation of the digitally layered voices of Ross's biological and spiritual families. They explain, "Within this song, 'the rock' stands in for G*nd; to be underneath or below the rock is a site of protection, of sanctuary." Ross's work is further informed by their embodied re-reading of Toni Morrison's novel *Sula*, in which the protagonists, who are part of a community called "The Bottom," navigate emotional and environmental landscapes. *I am under the rock the rock is higher than I* conflates dissonance and harmony, invisibility and visibility, and past and present.

This is Amina Ross's first solo exhibition in New York. Ross is an artist, educator, community organizer and life-long learner. They have presented work in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles, London, Havana, Rotterdam and The Hague. Ross recently participated in a residency at Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, where they completed the work on their project for Wave Hill. They received a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and an MFA from the Yale School of Art.

PUBLIC PROGRAM: SAT, OCT 15, 2 PM, *Meet the Artist*

Organized by former Senior Curator of Visual Arts Eileen Jeng Lynch, the Sunroom Project Space provides an opportunity for New York-area emerging artists to develop and exhibit a site-specific project as a solo show. The 2022 season features, consecutively, Kevin Quiles Bonilla, Anina Major, Krystal DiFronzo, Heidi Norton, Deep Pool and Amina Ross.

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