

Review of Prof. George Larkins' Works in the Works talk on November 28th, 2023.

Reviewed by Dr. Zheng Zhu, Assistant Professor of Humanities, NYCCT

Prof. George Larkins delivered a powerful, moving, and thought-provoking presentation that detailed his journey, struggle, and ambition as an artist and educator. Entitled *Trauma Visualized*, Prof. Larkins' talk centered around the complex interplay between his upbringing as a black man who grew up in the segregated South and his incredible story of using art works to *teach the truth* and *speak the truth* about history.

Trauma was the key word in Prof. Larkin's talk. It represented the feelings and experiences of many black bodies who witnessed, personally experienced, and fought against the racist oppressions during some of the darkest historical periods in the United States. The notion of blackness was a *traumatized* concept that needed to be seen, examined, and re-examined in the context of social injustice, political dominations, and countless painful memories that were still fresh in the minds of those who were oppressed and silenced.

Prof. Larkins recounted some of his early days as an aspiring artist, with a specific emphasis on his time in Los Angeles. Prof. Larkins considered *his LA experience* a life-changing moment in his career. He was able to travel the world and truly use his talent and diligence to create works that were inspirational and educational. Prof. Larkins reinforced the importance of teaching morality and fostering that sense of ethical responsibility among students who should be informed, both correctly and intellectually, about the complicated and painful past, and the present situation. They need to know where we were and how we got to where we are now.

Prof. Larkins' current project is a multimedia work in progress. Named "The Beast in the Room," this project is aimed at giving the traumatized black body a voice to talk about their experiences, perceptions, and ways to cope with the political system and various forms of social inequalities.

Prof. Larkins' lifelong dedication to art and education was inspiring and admirable. His fight to empower the marginalized with a voice and space to tell their stories and share their experiences will leave a significant legacy that continues to inspire the next generations of artists and educators!