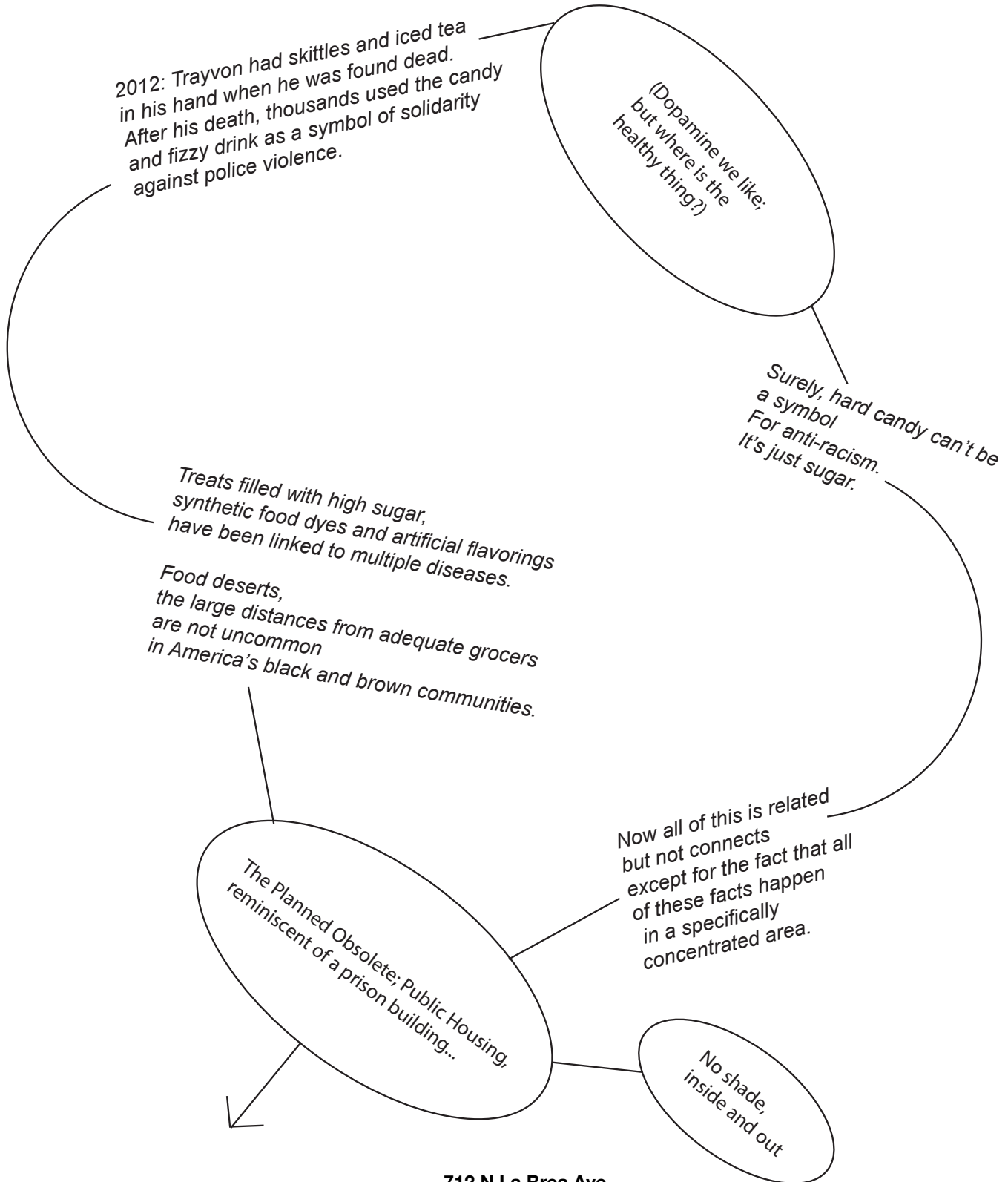


Brandon Ndife

What's the sun to a raisin?

712 N La Brea Ave

November 19, 2022–February 4, 2023



MATTHEW BROWN

Matthew Brown is pleased to present *What's the sun to a raisin?* a solo exhibition of recent works by New York based artist Brandon Ndife. Like Langston Hughes's seminal "Harlem"—which asks "What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?"—the exhibition attends to the urban landscape as a means to raise important sociopolitical questions about the contemporary experience of life in America.

Transgressing the boundaries between interior and exterior, domestic and public, organic and artificial, Ndife unearths the relics of everyday life under capitalism and embalms them in a perpetual state of withering and decay. With this formal nod to Hughes' raisins in the sun, he paradoxically produces fertile terrains which lay bare the economic, architectural, and ecological systems that structure our environments.

To produce his freestanding sculptures, Ndife purchases or salvages common furnishings that organize our households such as shelving units, cabinetry, and other easily-recognizable, readily-available, and mass-produced fixtures. Cast in resin and polyurethane foam, these implausible accumulations of familiar household furniture are precariously heaped with tree branches and other organic materials to produce tenuous assemblages that are both familiar and surreal.

Under this treatment, the furnishings retain their class legibility: the "fast furniture" Ndife utilizes implies a particular class position of scarcity and necessity. Interested in the genealogy and politics of quality and taste, Ndife uses fast furniture to demonstrate the extent to which globalization, capitalism, colonialism, and structural racism can (through governmental programs like Section 8 and SNAP) have the power to shape our interiors and interiority.

Although removed from the home, these objects retain a complex, auratic relationship to their original contexts, implying some past use-value and indexing the human beings whose homes they might have once inhabited. In Ndife's work, a lawn chair can be a surrogate for the human figure in the same way that a bag of Skittles can be a symbol of the abject brutality of racism in America.

Candy-striped awnings evoke bodegas and confectionary shops while sail shades in technicolors of red, green, and bright yellow make reference to cooling stations built in Los Angeles and other communities wilting in the heat of climate change. These elements of public architecture coalesce with more private, intimate fragments to produce a menagerie of objects for anthropological study. A bag of potato chips cast in silver foil, a delicate branch of overripe tomatoes, a storage cabinet made in China and sold by U.S. retailer Lowes—an insistence on the consumer object as cultural bellwether echoes throughout the exhibition, as if to say: we are what we eat.

Brandon Ndife (b. 1991, Hammond, IN) lives and works in New York City. He received his MFA in 2020 from Bard College and his BFA in 2013 from Cooper Union.

Solo and two-person exhibitions include *Shade Tree*, Storm King Art Center, New Windsor, NY (2022); *Down to the Spoons and Forks*, Ezra and Cecile Zilkha Gallery, Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT (2022); *MY ZONE*, Bureau, New York (2020); *Minor twin worlds*, Brandon Ndife & Diane Severin Nguyen, Bureau, New York (2019); *Ties that Bind*, Shoot the Lobster, New York (2018); *Just Passin' Thru*, Interstate Projects, New York (2016); *Meanderthal*, Species, Atlanta, GA (2016); Rodi Gallery, Yorktown Heights, NY (2014).

Selected group exhibitions include *The "t" is Silent*, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Sint-Martens-Latem, Belgium (2022); *Gravity, a proposal*, organized by Cameron Martin, Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York (2022); *A Través*, James Cohan, New York (2022); *Soft Water Hard Stone*, New Museum Triennial, New Museum, New York (2021); *untitled Arrangement*, Bureau, New York (2021); *BLOOM*, Park View / Paul Soto, Los Angeles (2021); *Cascadence*, organized by K.R.M. Mooney and McIntyre Parker, Altman Siegel, San Francisco (2021); *Winterfest: An Exhibition of Arts and Crafts*, Aspen Art Museum, CO (2021); *Material Conditions*, Matthew Brown Gallery, Los Angeles (2020).

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