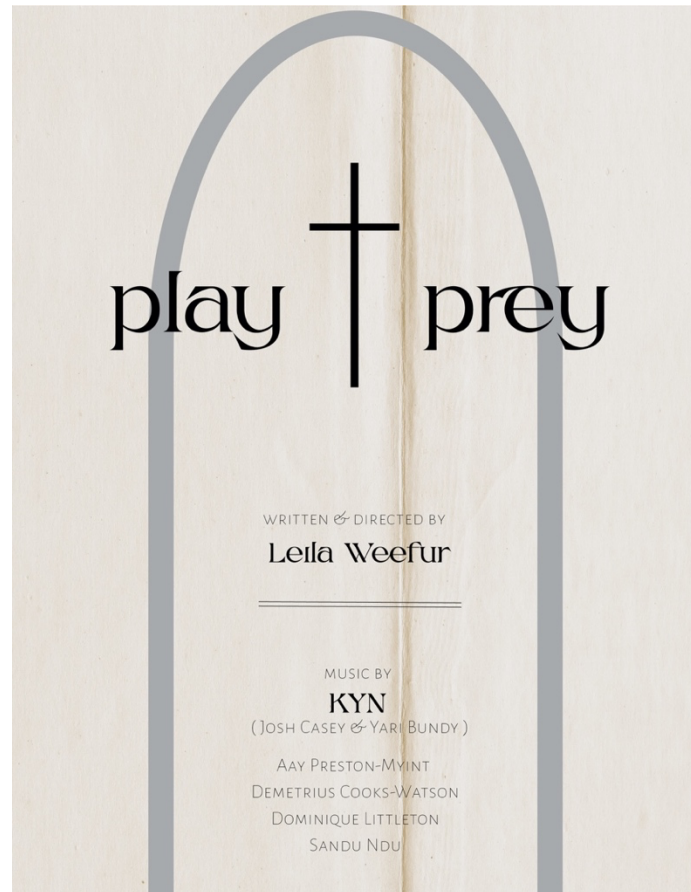


PLAY†PREY

October 16 – December 4, 2021



Leila Weefur, *PLAY†PREY: A Gospel*, 2021. Image courtesy of the artist.

Opening Artist Reception: October 16, 4-6pm

September 22, 2021, San Francisco, CA – Minnesota Street Project Foundation (MSP Foundation) is pleased to announce **PLAY†PREY: A Gospel**, a multi-channel film experience by artist Leila Weefur, opening October 16, 2021. *PLAY†PREY: A Gospel*, is the third exhibition by the inaugural grantees of the MSP Foundation's [California Black Voices Project](#). Upcoming exhibitions by inaugural grantees include Indira Allegra and Rashaad Newsome.

Weefur's *PLAY†PREY: A Gospel*, featured on the main floor at Minnesota Street Project in Gallery 106, recounts a relationship between God, the Church, and a queer Black child. The

spiritual narrative takes inspiration from four lyrical sermons in James Weldon Johnson's *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse*.

*In that great day,
People, in that great day,
God's a-going to rain down fire.
God's a-going to sit in the middle of the air
To judge the quick and the dead.*

— "The Judgement Day" *God's Trombones: Seven Negro Sermons in Verse*,
James Weldon Johnson

Presented as three separate films playing simultaneously, Weefur's installation builds a spiritual narrative that contemplates the structures, literally and metaphorically, and the rules imposed on pleasure, play, and sexuality under the rigidity of Black Christianity.

In the second collaboration with KYN (Josh Casey & Yari Bundy) and with contributions from vocalist Sandra Lawson-Ndu, the film's original soundtrack recreates elements familiar to Christian gospel, combined with contemporary influences, to create a textured and personal touch. Filmed in the Havenscourt Community Church (Oakland, CA), where Weefur was baptized, the semi-autobiographical work also brings architectural structures common to the church into the Minnesota Street Project installation.

"We go to the cinema to escape so that the film can swallow you whole and let your daily life dissolve. I hope to do the same with my films. To create video installations that evoke the sensorial experience of cinema," comments Weefur. "Telling stories translated through my own experience, I can create narratives that allow people to feel something uniquely personal and ensure that my practice also feeds into an eco-system of queer and BIPOC communities."

In addition to Weefur's video installation, *PLAY†PREY: A Gospel* at Minnesota Street Project, Telematic Media Arts will open Weefur's single-channel installation, *PLAY†PREY: The Old Testament* on October 9, 2021. An overture to the story of queer Biblical reclamation, *PLAY†PREY: The Old Testament* is a deconstruction of traditional Christianity, reckoning with colonial biblical history. The film's cinematic narrative is further accentuated by *Wax Monument VII (The Cross)*, a sculptural offering comprised of 506 palm-sized wax crosses, representative of the number of times "fire" is mentioned in the bible. *Wax Monument VII (The Cross)* is created by Weefur's long-time collaborator, Sandy Williams IV, the star actor in their previous work, *Between Beauty and Horror*.

In their entirety, Weefur's multi-channel film installations, *PLAY†PREY: A Gospel* and *PLAY†PREY: The Old Testament*, explore the playful impulses, innocence, and underlying violence implicated in the experience of queer Black children in the Christian Church.

One-Night Only @ Saint Joseph's Art Foundation

PLAY†PREY: A Performance

November 4, 2021

Join Leila Weefur, special guest Sandy Williams IV, and collaborators, for a one-night only presentation of *PLAY†PREY: A Performance*. The event is made possible through a collaboration with Saint Joseph's Arts Foundation, Telematic Media Arts, and Minnesota Street Project Foundation. Registration information to be announced. Event Location: Saint Joseph's Arts Society, 1401 Howard St, San Francisco, CA 94103.

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PLAY†PREY: A Gospel opens on October 16, 2021 and runs through December 4, 2021 at Minnesota Street Project.

Opening Artist Reception: October 16, 2021 from 4pm – 6pm.

The exhibition is free and open to the public at 1275 Minnesota Street Project and online. For information on the Project's social distancing requirements and hours of operation visit: <http://minnesotastreetproject.com>

PLAY†PREY: The Old Testament opens October 9, 2021 at Telematic Media Arts.

For more information visit: www.ttlelematicccc.com

To further experience California Black Voices Project inaugural grantee Leila Weefur, visit ***Beyond the Sky***, opening October 20, 2021 at the Museum of African Diaspora (MoAD).

For more information visit: www.moad.org

About Leila Weefur

Leila Weefur (He/They/She) is an artist, writer, and curator based in Oakland, CA. Through video and installation, their interdisciplinary practice examines the performativity intrinsic to systems of belonging. The work brings together concepts of sensorial memory, abject Blackness, hyper surveillance, and the erotic. Weefur is a recipient of the Walter & Elise Haas Creative Work Fund and the MSP California Black Voices Project. Weefur has worked with local and national institutions including The Wattis Institute, McEvoy Foundation, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, SFMOMA, Museum of the African Diaspora, and Smack Mellon. Weefur's writing has been published in SEEN by BlackStar Productions, Sming Sming Books, Baest Journal, and more. Weefur is a lecturer at Stanford University.

About California Black Voices Project

[California Black Voices Project](#) is a grant-making program of the Minnesota Street Project Foundation for Black artists and curators working in California. Five grantees were selected through a jury composed of four prominent art world professionals. Each grantee receives

\$10,000, and an exhibition presented at Minnesota Street Project, as well as virtually on MSP Adjacent. Upcoming 2021–2022 exhibitions are currently in development with California Black Voices Project inaugural grantees Indira Allegra and Rashaad Newsome.

For information visit: <https://minnesotastreetproject.org/california-black-voices-project>

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About Minnesota Street Project Foundation

Established in 2019, [Minnesota Street Project Foundation](#) embarks on initiatives to further develop the diversity and vibrancy of arts-related culture within and beyond the Minnesota Street Project’s model. The MSP Foundation is dedicated to the realization of a thriving, sustainable arts community in the Bay Area.

Through collaboration, the MSP Foundation advances educational and civic programming and provides direct financial support to artist and arts organizations. The MSP Foundation commits to fostering relationships with local, national, and international businesses, individuals, and institutions to support the evolving landscape of art practice and patronage. For more information on supporting expanded programming, please visit [Minnesota Street Project Foundation](#).

Minnesota Street Project Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the full extent permitted by law.