

IRENE SUNWOO —

Burden of Proof: Cameron Rowland's *D37*

It's easy to miss the first work in *D37*, Cameron Rowland's solo exhibition at MOCA, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. In a formerly empty portion of the museum's donor plaque, affixed to a periphery wall near the entrance of its Grand Avenue complex, the artist has discreetly added an inscription. It reads, "2015 MOCA REAL ESTATE ACQUISITION," which is also the title of his piece, followed by an acknowledgment of an \$8.4 million gift from the Community Redevelopment Agency of Los Angeles (CRA). Among the other philanthropic contributors enumerated here, the CRA is one of the museum's top benefactors. As a municipal agency, however—recently shuttered, it was founded in 1948 and for decades steered the redevelopment of "blighted" swaths of the city—it is an anomaly on the list of blue-chip supporters, which includes real estate tycoons, entertainment and banking executives, venture capitalists, and art collectors.

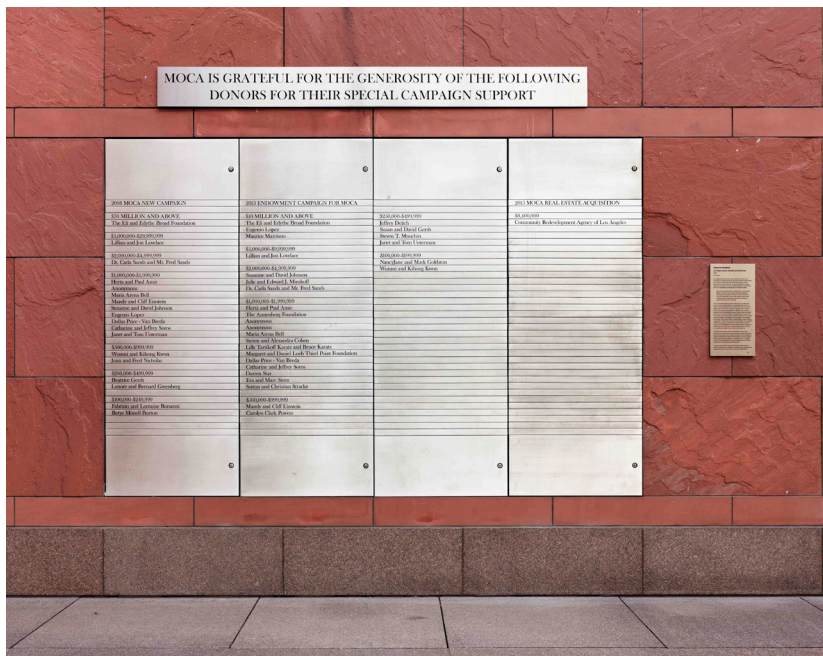
Excruciating attention to the institutional conditions in which he operates is a through line in Rowland's work. Consider his highly acclaimed solo show *91020000* at Artists Space, where he harnessed the institution's nonprofit status to acquire and display industrial goods manufactured by prison inmates. These items are available for purchase through Corcraft, a division of the New York State Department of Correctional Services, which sells its products to state- or publicly funded organizations. [1] At the Whitney Biennial the following year, the museum invested \$25,000 at Rowland's behest in a Social Impact Bond, or a "Pay for Success" contract. On display, the documentation of this contract cast a laser-sharp light on how dehumanizing financial incentives are currently fueling programs to reduce recidivism. [2] Beyond facilitating striking conceptual feats and critically reimagining the potential political dimensions of an artwork and even the exhibition format, leveraging institutional privilege also seems to offer Rowland a cathartic methodology for reflecting on his own agency as an artist—testing the limits of creative and intellectual freedom while still operating within given institutional frameworks. At MOCA, however, his engagement with his host is detached, for all he really needs is its history.

Rowland recovers this history in an extended caption—something he produces for all his works. Meticulously researched and written in unembellished prose, his captions are intended less as interpretive description existing in parallel to the work than as an aggregate of information that is, for

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[1] For a perceptive review of *91020000*, see Alex Kitnick, "Openings: Cameron Rowland," *Artforum* (March 2016), [link](#).

[2] Rowland's Biennial piece, titled *Public Money*, builds upon research and arguments presented in Zenia Kish and Justin Leroy, "Technologies of Racial Finance from Slave Insurance to Philanthrocapital," *Cultural Studies*, vol. 29, no. 5–6 (2015), 630–51.



Cameron Rowland, *2015 MOCA REAL ESTATE ACQUISITION*, 2018. Donor plaque.

The redlining map of Los Angeles drawn by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation in 1939 gave Bunker Hill, block D37, the lowest possible rating. D37 extended from West 4th Street to West Temple Street, and from Figueroa Street to South Hill Street. The report indicated that residents were "low-income level" and were predominantly "Mexicans and Orientals." The HOLC's Residential Security Map report for Bunker Hill states:

"It has been through all the phases of decline and is now thoroughly blighted. Subversive racial elements predominate; dilapidation and squalor are everywhere in evidence. It is a slum area and one of the city's melting pots. There is a slum clearance project under consideration but no definite steps have as yet been taken. It is assigned the lowest of low 'red' grade."

The Community Redevelopment Agency of the City of Los Angeles was formed in 1948 under the California Community Redevelopment Act of 1945, in conjunction with the 1937 and 1949 federal Housing Acts, which authorized its "slum removal." The CRA was granted powers of eminent domain to be used in the redevelopment of "blighted" areas. A primary purpose for the CRA's redevelopment projects was to increase tax revenue for the city. One of the first redevelopment projects proposed by the CRA was in Bunker Hill, on the basis that the neighborhood spent more tax dollars on police, firefighting, and healthcare than it generated. A CRA pamphlet promoting the project stated, "Blight is a liability, Blight is malignant, Blight is a social peril." The CRA's "slum clearance" project in Bunker Hill was adopted in 1959. Through seizure and through sales under the threat of eminent domain, all 7,310 residential units were demolished and their residents were forcibly removed. The CRA's slum clearance in Bunker Hill was one of the first redevelopment projects to rely on tax increment financing.

In 1980, the CRA issued a request for proposals for a project called California Plaza. Proposals were required to include an outdoor pedestrian plaza, a parking structure, and a modern art museum. The winning group of architects called themselves Bunker Hill Associates. The museum outlined in this proposal became The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. In 1983, the CRA offered MOCA a lease on the land located at 250 South Grand Avenue for a ninety-nine-year term at no rent.

In October 2015, the CRA sold the land at 250 South Grand Avenue to MOCA for \$100,000. One month later, in November 2015, a tax assessment triggered by the sale recorded the value of the land at \$8,500,000.

the artist, as essential to the work and its interpretation as its year, title, and dimensions: data that is typically provided by object labels. (So much so that Rowland requires that the full caption texts be published alongside authorized photographs of his work, as if to ensure that the circulation of images does not entirely degrade the aura of each work.) At MOCA, his inscription on the donor plaque is, on its own, inscrutable and muted. With its caption, which is imprinted on a steel sheet and bolted to the wall beside the plaque, the work becomes saturated with historical details and conceptual connections, priming visitors for the exhibition's ambitious inquiry into the transhistorical ways that racialized dispossession has underwritten property relations.

A fairly well-known episode in MOCA's formation anchors this first text. Armed with the power of eminent domain, in the late 1950s the CRA set its sights on Bunker Hill—a once affluent neighborhood in Downtown Los Angeles—displacing its residents and razing the site to break ground for a new downtown center. Notably, that site is today occupied, rather flamboyantly, by Diller Scofidio + Renfro's Broad Museum, Frank Gehry's Walt Disney Concert Hall, and MOCA itself, designed by Arata Isozaki and completed in 1986. As a case study, the redevelopment of Bunker Hill, and MOCA's origins in particular, has long interested urban historians because of its rather unorthodox reliance on tax increment financing. In broad strokes: the CRA engineered a legal stipulation that allocated 1.5 percent of the budget of a mixed-use development (today, California Plaza) for the construction of a contemporary art museum (MOCA) on site. As one review of Isozaki's museum complex shrewdly observed, "MOCA has the distinction of being the country's biggest public artwork." [3]

But Rowland revises this origin story with a preface and coda, highlighting two lesser-known and seemingly unconnected events that he suggests are anything but. In the 1930s, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation redlined Bunker Hill, designated "block D37," after reporting rampant "dilapidation and

[3] Pilar Vilades, "MOCA Moves In," *Progressive Architecture*, vol. 67, no. 11 (November 1986), 83.

squalor,” as well as a high population of “Mexicans and Orientals.” [4] If, as Rowland argues, this racially motivated property devaluation established the conditions for the CRA’s postwar redevelopment of the site, then by extension it not only helped secure the conditions for MOCA’s founding but also cemented its financial health through two interrelated moves. The museum not only received a ninety-nine-year, rent-free lease on the land, bestowed by the CRA in 1986, but it also bought the land for \$100,000 upon the CRA’s dissolution in 2015—a fraction of the \$8.5 million valuation attributed to the land by a tax assessment only one month after the sale. The extended history of Bunker Hill and MOCA is a disconcerting rags-to-cultural-riches story. It is also long and sometimes nonsensical, full of obscure bureaucratic details and nuanced tax regulations—minutiae that Rowland, an astute researcher and sharp analytic thinker, clearly savors.

To call attention to this sequence of historical events, no matter how unimpeachable (Rowland is a careful writer, offering facts over interpretation), within the sacred space of a museum’s donor wall is fairly outrageous—at least through the eyes of an institution. Though today it is not uncommon for a museum to foster critique through commissioned work, supporting artists’ incisive readings of its institutional status, MOCA, in fact, initially declined Rowland’s proposal for the donor plaque, acquiescing only after extensive negotiations. [5] The transparent acknowledgment of philanthropic gifts can be critically interpreted in many ways. Yet the purpose of a donor wall, generally, is to laud generosity and celebrate investment in a shared cultural future—not to excavate a history of disenfranchisement or, as in the rather unique case of MOCA, to re-entangle that history of disenfranchisement with the ongoing sources and methods of financial support that allow the museum to fulfill its mission.

With an extraordinary economy of means, *2015 MOCA REAL ESTATE ACQUISITION* thus brilliantly performs double epigraphic duty. First, it reframes MOCA’s institutional identity by recognizing the CRA’s ingenious synthesis of racially motivated property devaluation and projected institutional growth. (A tricky thing, patronage.) Indeed, Rowland’s caption acts like an object label for MOCA, delving deeply—and more deeply than the museum would have liked—into its provenance. Second, the work and its caption unlock the cryptic title of the exhibition, *D37*, revealing his project’s holistic methodology and spatio-temporal purview. Establishing the agenda of the exhibition, it outlines a recurring trajectory from racialized dispossession to financial profit, and the politically transformative powers of property relations—before visitors even walk through the door.

Getting to the main portion of *D37* requires following an idiosyncratic path drawn by Isozaki: from the street-level ticket kiosk, down a winding stair that empties into a sunken courtyard and, eventually, emerging in the museum’s subterranean lobby. From there, it’s likely directions from museum staff, and not signage, that will send you weaving through a suite of permanent collection galleries before arriving at the exhibition. Unannounced by any graphics, the show occupies a modest, one-room gallery—one of Isozaki’s less spectacular spaces, and a literal dead end. If Rowland’s plaque intervention asks us to

[4] Cameron Rowland, *2015 MOCA REAL ESTATE ACQUISITION*, 2018; Donor plaque.

[5] Interview with Cameron Rowland, November 2018.

contemplate the intertwined racial and financial dimensions of the exhibition site *en plein air*, from the belly of the museum he asks us to think through such issues at a more intimate scale.

In the gallery, an attendant will direct you to the pamphlet for *D37*; without any introductory text, didactics, or even an artist bio provided by the museum, the pamphlet is your only guide for experiencing the show and navigating Rowland's project. Penned entirely by the artist, it includes captions for each work in the exhibition and a weighty essay. Though written with surgical clarity, the text is thickened by an extraordinary amount of information that includes historical vignettes, statistics, law enforcement practices, and legal technicalities. Three discernible interests emerge, illustrating the profoundly elastic and diachronic manifestations of racialized dispossession: the slave as taxable property generating revenue for the state; redlining as an engine for urban renewal; and civil asset forfeiture as the basis for a marketplace of goods that profit police. These intertwined frameworks put forward a broader argument that runs throughout Rowland's work, which variously encompasses everyday objects (typically acquired rather than fabricated), immaterial transactions (such as contracts and financial investments), and text (rigorous and didactic): that the foundational mechanisms of slavery persist, impalpably shifting shape in step with capitalism's historical development and political maintenance.

If his text is maximal in content, his installation is absolutely ascetic, exacerbated by the airlessness of the gallery. A concise sequence of objects and documents are distributed around the perimeter of the room. What commands the *mise en scène* is an ensemble of humble objects. Two bundles of bicycles lean against opposite walls, two portable leaf blowers and a hedge trimmer sit on the floor, and a single stroller is parked nearby. It is an offbeat assortment of things, each visibly worn with use and each conjuring some form of human mobility. The items capture an awkward temporality, as if they—and/ or their previous owners—were en route somewhere, though intercepted along the way.



Cameron Rowland, *Group of 11 Used Bikes – Item: 0281-007089*, 2018. Group of 11 Used Bikes sold for \$287; 45 x 130 x 54 inches [114.30 x 330.20 x 137.16 cm]; rental at cost.

In the United States, property seized by the police is sold at police auction. Auction proceeds are used to fund the police.

Civil asset forfeiture originated in the English Navigation Act of 1660. [1] The Navigation Acts were established to maintain the English monopoly on the triangular trade between England, West Africa, and the English colonies. [2] As Eric Williams writes, "Negroes, the most important export of Africa, and sugar, the most important export of the West Indies, were the principal commodities enumerated by the Navigation Laws." [3] During the seventeenth century, the auction was standardized as a primary component of the triangle trade to sell slaves, goods produced by slaves, and eventually luxury goods. The auction remains widely used as a means to efficiently distribute goods for the best price. [4]

Police, ICE, and CBP may retain from 80 percent to 100 percent of the revenue generated from the auction of seized property.

Rental at cost: Artworks indicated as "Rental at cost" are not sold. Each of these artworks may be rented for 5 years for the total price realized at police auction.

[1]: Caleb Nelson, "The Constitutionality of Civil Forfeiture," *The Yale Law Journal* 125, no. 8 [June 2016], [link](#).

[2]: Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1944], 56–57.

[3]: Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, 57.

[4]: Brian Learmount, *A History of the Auction* [London: Barnard & Learmount, 1985], 30–31.

Rowland's essay and captions provides a window onto the objects' shared history, which is both fascinating and unsettling. The artist purchased the bicycles, the landscaping equipment, and the stroller at police auctions, a practice given context in the *D37* pamphlet. If an individual is suspected of a crime or wrongdoing but not charged, punitive action may instead be transferred to that individual's property (*in rem*) through civil asset forfeiture rather than to the individual (*in personam*). On a conceptual level, the transfer of punishment from person to property is perplexing. But more urgent, as Rowland corroborates through his research, is the reality that civil asset forfeiture is a policing practice that primarily targets and dispossesses minorities—a harrowing elision of object and person that recalls what Cheryl Harris has described as slavery's "cruel tension between property and humanity," and that in the gallery is emphasized further in *Assessment*, which juxtaposes an eighteenth-century grandfather clock, acquired from a plantation, and nineteenth-century tax receipts that categorize slaves alongside assets such as clocks, carriages, and horses as taxable property. [6] Indeed, turning his gaze back to the seventeenth century, Rowland traces the origins of civil asset forfeiture to maritime law, which introduced the seizure of commodities—including slaves—as a means to regulate triangular trade between England, West Africa, and the colonies. Through this prism, the forfeited and auctioned objects in the gallery seem less awkward than truly resigned. Their very presence is an extension of displaced punishment, redirected from absent bodies to material objects, and further still, transformed into financial gain. By virtue of circulation in police auctions, forfeited property generates funds for police departments and the Department of Homeland Security, who are both the enforcers and the financial beneficiaries of this particular "regime of property." [7]

The objects in *D37*, understood through (or perhaps inseparable from) the context of Rowland's texts, are themselves material evidence—simultaneously anthropomorphized and dehumanized—of abstract systems of power. Yet these objects are also material evidence of the process and methods of his artistic practice, which relies as much on scholarly research as it does on fieldwork to disarticulate the politics of property relations, both in

[6] Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," *Harvard Law Review*, vol. 106, no. 28 (June 1993): 1,719.

[7] Cameron Rowland, *D37* (Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art, 2018), exhibition pamphlet.

Cameron Rowland, *Assessment*, 2018. Late eighteenth-century English grandfather clock acquired from Paul Dalton Plantation, Yemassee, South Carolina; 1848 tax receipt from Mississippi; 1852 tax receipt from Mississippi; 1860 tax receipt from Virginia; 92 x 135 x 12 inches [233.68 x 342.90 x 30.48 cm].

In the United States, property taxes on slaves were collected by slaveholding states. By 1860, slaves constituted 20 percent of all American wealth. [1] Tax collection practices varied from state to state, but taxable assets typically included slaves, land, horses, cattle, carriages, and clocks.

Plantation owners adopted clock time during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, further regulating the labor of slaves in an effort to supply the increasing demand of industrializing Britain. The overseer would echo the chime of the housebound clock by sounding a horn or a bell. "Simultaneously tyrannical, modern, and profit-oriented, the nineteenth-century clock and its attendant ability to rationalize and order the behavior of human beings became the planters' weapon of choice in their ongoing battle with their chattel." [2]

Property taxes collected on slaves were used to develop the slaveholding state governments. These governments remain intact.

[1]: Robin L. Einhorn, *American Taxation, American Slavery* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006], 214.

[2]: Mark M. Smith, *Mastered by the Clock: Time, Slavery, and Freedom in the American South* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997], 5.



terms of its stakes and procedures. Though unacknowledged in the exhibition, this aspect of his project warrants attention.

In the United States, most police auctions are run by private organizations that consolidate the forfeited property obtained by different police departments—an arrangement that centralizes the sale process and alleviates the operational burden for individual departments. One such organization, which Rowland studied, runs its sales through the website propertyroom.com. On the website, bidding on an inventory of primarily low-value assets is open to the public. (Typically, the seizure of low-value assets is not contested in court since the cost of litigation usually outweighs the market value of the item.) Previously called stealitback.com, the online platform is eerily modeled after eBay, with sales categories ranging from jewelry to vehicles to furniture to art. Rowland observed sales trends by visiting the warehouses where buyers collect their purchases and discerned popular categories of items. These trends informed his own bidding and purchases, and are reflected in the objects presented in the gallery. Importantly, Rowland also extends the conditions of the marketplace to the exhibition. The displayed objects retain their inventory tags while their titles and captions include warehouse inventory numbers, as well as final sale prices. And even the way these objects are installed in the gallery—the bikes clustered, leaning against a wall, for example—documents the condition in which Rowland retrieved them. [8] (I found the presentation of bikes especially chilling in that they evoked not only the plunder of goods but also the sweeping plunder of childhood time.) In this way, he cuts through an enduring tradition of the sculptural readymade by attending to both the materiality and politicized financialization of dispossessed property.

At first glance, then, the objects seem embalmed in these conditions, frozen in time. But in fact, Rowland has designed their futures. Each of the items acquired at police auction is governed by the artist's rental contract, which stipulates that institutions or collectors may rent—but never own—these artworks “for 5 years for the total price realized at police auction.” [9] In an illuminating analysis of the history and mechanics of Rowland's rental contracts, which are attached to a substantial portion of his work, Eric Golo Stone

[8] Interview with Cameron Rowland, November 2018.

[9] See image captions.



D37, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, 2018. Installation view showing:

Tanaka Hedge Trimmer – Item: 0628-002770, 2018. Tanaka Hedge Trimmer sold for \$87.09.
Stihl Gas Backpack Blower – Item: 0628-002765, 2018. Stihl Gas Backpack Blower sold for \$206.
Stihl Backpack Blower – Item: 0514-005983, 2018. Stihl Backpack Blower sold for \$59.
Summer 3d One Stroller – Item: 6781-005030, 2018. Summer 3d One Stroller sold for \$1.00.

posits that the artist's "overarching critical project destabilizes expectations of ownership rather than simply reflecting on the implicit inequalities and exclusion created by property ownership." [10] Thus by congealing the conditions of their purchase via titles, captions, exhibition methods, and securing their value and temporality through the rental contract, Rowland has equipped the items to resist market forces, and more specifically, the financial volatility of the art market, which in a haunting echo of the power structures from which these objects emerged, currently thrives by distancing artists from the value that their work accrues through the processes of circulation and speculation.

Rowland's exploration of forms of resistance to and within the terms of property exchange and ownership returns to the scale of real estate in what could be considered the final piece in the show. Accessing this work, titled *Depreciation*, requires some mind-bending, mental gymnastics, establishing a fibrous syntax of interrelations across the show's objects, gestures, and case studies, and confirming Rowland's talent for exhibition-making.

Depreciation is presented through a set of documents that records the artist's purchase of one acre of land on Edisto Island, South Carolina. According to the piece's caption, the site draws its significance from General William Tecumseh Sherman's promise of "40 acres and a mule" to freed slaves in 1865—a crucial but disappointingly brief episode in the history of reparations. Of the forty thousand freed slaves who settled in the region delineated in Sherman's "Field Order," stretching from South Carolina to Florida, ten thousand settled on Edisto Island. Following Lincoln's assassination, however, Sherman's field order was swiftly reversed by Vice President Andrew Johnson, who instructed the return of lands to dispossessed Confederate owners, leaving most former slaves no choice but to enter the sharecropping system or else risk arrest—now dually dispossessed of both land and freedom.

The parcel of land that Rowland purchased was once part of the Maxcy Plantation on Edisto Island, where ex-slaves were contracted to work. Its precise coordinates and features are detailed and illustrated in an Appraisal Report (on display), issued following the sale, which valued the land at \$0. Snapshots depicting a nondescript, overgrown lot appear alongside photos of property boundary lines and a trio of exponentially distant satellite images of the site. The work itself, however, is perhaps best understood as a spatial construct, one that coalesces a series of transactions and provisions.

As the materials listed in the caption indicate, *Depreciation* comprises "1 acre on Edisto Island, South Carolina" and a "Restrictive covenant." The latter is of kaleidoscopic significance. Restrictive covenants are clauses in deeds that legally bind current and all future owners to certain obligations and exclusions in the maintenance of property, varying from the color of paint on a building's exterior to the color of its future owners or tenants—as was the case during the first half of the twentieth century in the United States, where for decades racially restrictive covenants (later outlawed by the Fair Housing Act of 1968) expeditiously bolstered housing segregation. While racially restrictive covenants helped to increase property value in white neighborhoods, they conversely facilitated the redlining of areas populated by lower-income minorities. Rowland's appropriation of the restrictive covenant responds directly to

[10] "Rental status is always determined before the work is offered for transfer, so it is in no way contingent on the individual or institution renting or being offered a rental. Rowland has committed never to sell works that are designated for rent; they therefore cannot generate a speculated market value. However, each time the artist decides to rent the work—drawing a new contract for a new lessee—the artist has an opportunity to raise, maintain, or lower the previously assigned rental-payment amount, perhaps taking into account the work's appreciating market value. Rowland's contract, then, does not foreclose the process of anticipating growth in the market value of his work, but it does regulate, and potentially resist, the process of accumulation, which the art market has increasingly accelerated." Eric Golo Stone, "Legal Implications: Cameron Rowland's Rental Contract," *October* 164 (Spring 2018), 93–94.

this long history of housing discrimination—and brings us back to the troubling origins of MOCA's own real estate acquisition. However, by manipulating its contractual powers, he attempts to undermine the underlying tension between race and property value and seems to turn the universe of property relations that has defined the museum's site upside down. Framed and displayed adjacent to the appraisal, his restrictive covenant specifies that "no Development or Use shall take place on the Property." [11] It cannot be built on, inhabited, subdivided, or leased—rules that were drafted with the express purpose of eliminating value from the property indefinitely but also prohibiting any restoration or increase of value in the future.

With a flash of urgency that erupts from the otherwise cool, even tone of his text, Rowland writes, "As reparation, this covenant asks how land might

[11] Cameron Rowland, *Depreciation*, 2018; Restrictive covenant; 1 acre on Edisto Island, South Carolina.



Cameron Rowland, *Depreciation*, 2018. Restrictive covenant; 1 acre on Edisto Island, South Carolina.

40 acres and a mule as reparations for slavery originates in General William Tecumseh Sherman's Special Field Orders No. 15, issued on January 16, 1865. Sherman's Field Order 15 was issued out of concern for a potential uprising of the thousands of ex-slaves who were following his army by the time it arrived in Savannah. [1]

The field order stipulated that "The islands from Charleston south, the abandoned rice fields along the rivers for thirty miles back from the sea, and the country bordering the Saint Johns River, Florida, are reserved and set apart for the settlement of the negroes now made free by the acts of war and the proclamation of the President of the United States. Each family shall have a plot of not more than forty acres of tillable ground." [2]

This was followed by the formation of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands in March 1865. In the months immediately following the issue of the field orders, approximately 40,000 former slaves settled in the area designated by Sherman on the basis of possessory title. [3] 10,000 of these former slaves were settled on Edisto Island, South Carolina. [4]

In 1866, following Lincoln's assassination, President Andrew Johnson effectively rescinded Field Order 15 by ordering these lands be returned to their previous Confederate owners.

Former slaves were given the option to work for their former masters as sharecroppers or be evicted. If evicted, former slaves could be arrested for homelessness under vagrancy clauses of the Black Codes. Those who refused to leave and refused to sign sharecrop contracts were threatened with arrest.

Although restoration of the land to the previous Confederate owners was slowed in some cases by court challenges filed by ex-slaves, nearly all the land settled was returned by the 1870s. As Eric Foner writes, "Johnson had in effect abrogated the Confiscation Act and unilaterally amended the law creating the [Freedmen's] Bureau. The idea of a Freedmen's Bureau actively promoting black landownership had come to an abrupt end." [5] The Freedmen's Bureau agents became primary proponents of labor contracts inducting former slaves into the sharecropping system. [6]

Among the lands that were repossessed in 1866 by former Confederate owners was the Maxcy Place plantation. "A group of freed people were at Maxcy Place in January 1866...The people contracted to

MARKET DATA ANALYSIS		COMPARABLE NO. 1		COMPARABLE NO. 2		COMPARABLE NO. 3	
Address		8060 Maxie Road Edisto Island		1 Miley Hill Rd Ravenel, SC 29407		Highway 174 Edisto Island	
Proximity to Subj.		15.04 miles NE		5.53 miles S		3.85 miles SE	
Sales Price		\$ N/A		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,500	
Price		\$ 5,263		\$ 2,750		\$ 1,071	
Data Source		MLS#16000004		Courthouse Records		Courthouse Records	
Date of Sale and Time Adjustment		N/A		01/29/2018		01/26/2018	
Location		Edisto Island		Ravenel		Edisto Island	
Site/View		Interior/Avg		Interior/Avg		Interior/Avg	
Site Area		0.97 Acre		0.95 Acre		2.0 Acres	
Topography		Level/Avg		Wetlands/Poor		Landlocked	
Tax Map#		068-00-00-041		229-13-00-051		028-00-00-054	
Restrictions		Non-Use Restriction		No Restrictions		No Restrictions	
Sales or Financing Concessions							
Net Adj. (Total)		Plus X Minus \$ -5,000		Plus X Minus \$ -5,500		X Plus Minus \$ 150	
Indicated Value of Subject		Gross 300.0% Net -100.0% \$ 0		Gross 281.8% Net -100.0% \$ 0		Gross 3358.3% Net 25.0% \$ 750	
Comments on Market Data:		The subject has a deed restriction that prohibits any use, including building, clearing and underbrushing. This limits the use of the subject to a buffer for the adjacent neighbors. However, the subject as it sits already serves as a buffer for the adjacent properties, so there is no incentive for either of the neighbors to purchase the subject. The range of adjusted indications is from \$0 to \$750. Considering the future cost of taxes, it is my opinion that the value of the subject site is \$0.					
Comments and Conditions of Appraisal:		The subject of this appraisal is an unimproved residential lot. The value is based on the "as is" condition of the subject. The square footage of the subject and comparables is approximate.					
Final Reconciliation:		The Sales Comparison Approach is the most widely used approach to value when appraising vacant land. This is because it reflects the actions of typical buyers and sellers in this particular market. The Income Approach is not used because vacant land is rarely rented. The Cost approach is not used because the land is vacant.					
I ESTIMATE THE MARKET VALUE, AS DEFINED, OF SUBJECT PROPERTY AS OF		August 25		2018		to be \$0	
SASS, HERRIN & ASSOCIATES, INC.							

exist outside of the legal-economic regime of property that was instituted by slavery and colonization. Rather than redistributing the property, the restriction imposed on 8060 Maxie Road's status as valuable and transactable real estate asserts antagonism to the regime of property as a means of reparation." [12]

From *something to nothing*: This instantaneous transformation of the land is, at first, difficult to wrap your head around. The immediate context of the gallery makes the proposition even more confounding. The idea that one acre of land could be worth less than the stroller that Rowland purchased at police auction, at a sale price of \$1, defies logic. Yet, like the donor plaque that complicates MOCA's auspicious origins, his own real estate acquisition forces us to confront and process the illogical yet calculated and all too often inequitable measures that sustain property relations—this time, though, to reject and refute the inexorability of these systems altogether. With *Depreciation*, Rowland thus calls for speculation of a different kind: is it possible to conceive of reparations outside of systems of property and wealth?

All images courtesy of the artist and ESSEX STREET, New York.

work for the proprietor, but no contract or list of names has been found." [7]

The one-acre piece of land at 8060 Maxie Road, Edisto Island, South Carolina, was part of the Maxcy Place plantation. This land was purchased at market value on August 6, 2018, by 8060 Maxie Road, Inc., a nonprofit company formed for the sole purpose of buying this land and recording a restrictive covenant on its use. This covenant has as its explicit purpose the restriction of all development and use of the property by the owner.

The property is now appraised at \$0. By rendering it legally unusable, this restrictive covenant eliminates the market value of the land. These restrictions run with the land, regardless of the owner. As such, they will last indefinitely.

As reparation, this covenant asks how land might exist outside of the legal-economic regime of property that was instituted by slavery and colonization. Rather than redistributing the property, the restriction imposed on 8060 Maxie Road's status as valuable and transactable real estate asserts antagonism to the regime of property as a means of reparation.

[1]: Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863–1877*, updated ed. [New York: Harper & Row, 1988; New York: HarperCollins, 2014], 71.

[2]: Headquarters Military Division of the Mississippi, Special Field Orders No. 15 [1865].

[3]: Foner, *Reconstruction*, 71.

[4]: Charles Spencer, *Edisto Island 1861 to 2006: Ruin, Recovery and Rebirth* [Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2008], 87.

[5]: Foner, *Reconstruction*, 161.

[6]: Foner, *Reconstruction*, 161.

[7]: Spencer, *Edisto Island 1861 to 2006*, 95.

[12] Cameron Rowland, *Depreciation*, 2018.