

Stony the Road **Dawoud Bey**

Exhibition Dates: July 19 – August 29, 2026

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died...

Lift Every Voice and Sing, James Weldon Johnson

Stephen Bulger Gallery is pleased to present Dawoud Bey's portfolio *Stony the Road* on display in our Reading Room Gallery. An exhibition of Bey's work will be presented congruently at The Art Gallery of Ontario in partnership with the Toronto Biennial, entitled [Material Histories, Living Landscapes](#), which opens on July 24, 2026.

Stony the Road is Bey's third project related to historical sites involved with the slave trade. In 2018, Stephen Bulger Gallery exhibited works from the first such project related to the Underground Railroad entitled *Night Coming Tenderly, Black*.

The Virginia Slave Trail., the winding, almost three-mile-long path that marks the procession of enslaved Africans from the Manchester docks of Richmond, alongside the James River, to the holding pens and auction houses from where they were sold, remains visible.

The lingering horror of the slave trade clings to the land. The trail is laden with memory, glimpses of the river shimmer through twist branches, vines entangle the low growth, and tree roots traverse the hardened ground, well-worn and marred from the hundreds of thousands of Black bodies who were walked along it, forced to endure their first tragic encounter with America.

The first enslaved Africans were brought to Hampton, Virginia, in 1619, but from 1830-1860 Richmond had become an epicenter for the slave trade, providing more than 350,000 brutalized men, women, and children who were foundational to the development of The United of America's economy. America's gruesome and troubled past begins here, along this trail, the living and breathing reminder of a history that cannot possible be reconciled but must be squarely examined.

The *Stony the Road* portfolio was published by Stephen Daiter Gallery, Chicago and the artist in November 2023. Each portfolio contains eight initialed and numbered gelatin silver photographs, on Ilford 255 gsm Baryta paper. The portfolio was designed and fabricated at Cloverleaf Studio, in Austin Texas. The edition is limited to twelve numbered sets plus three artist proofs.

In the fall of 2026, from September 12 – October 17, The Stephen Bulger Gallery will host an exhibition of Bey's large-scale portraits from 1989-1990 on display in our main gallery.