

GLADSTONE

Rhea Nayyar, "Carrie Mae Weems *Kitchen Table* Photos Star in Kamala Harris Ad,"
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HYPERALLERGIC

Carrie Mae Weems *Kitchen Table* Photos Star in Kamala Harris Ad

The iconic images from Weems's 1990 series appear in a recent video advertisement airing in key battleground states.



Carrie Mae Weems, "Untitled (Woman and Daughter with Children)" (1990), *Kitchen Table Series*, gelatin silver print (all images © Carrie Mae Weems; courtesy of the artist and Gladstone Gallery, New York, Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin)

Four photos from Carrie Mae Weems's seminal *Kitchen Table Series* (1990) made a cameo appearance in a Kamala Harris campaign advertisement less than a week before election day turns the corner. Produced and directed by filmmakers Tanya Selvaratnam and Hannah Rosenzweig as a commission for the political action committee Communities United, "**Kamala's Table**" began streaming and airing on digital platforms across battleground states as of Wednesday, October 30, in a final push to appeal to voters

Weems, who received a National Medal of Arts last month, has been lauded for the *Kitchen Table Series* since its debut. Using a modest dining table as a powerful stage, Weems examines and celebrates Black womanhood through the lens of intimacy, family, business, and daily routine.

"The kitchen table — it's where we gather with family," the narrator starts as the ad kicks off with a slideshow of Weems's black-and-white photos before rolling to photos of Harris as a child with her mother Shyamala and sister Maya. "It's where we eat together, pay our bills. It's where Kamala Harris learned the importance of serving the people."

The ad references some of Harris's campaign points for the economy, including her proposals for increased child tax credits and to offer first-time home buyers \$25,000 to better afford down payments.

"Kamala Harris was raised in a middle-class family," wrote the racial justice organization Communities United, which prioritizes empowering young, women, and BIPOC voters in battleground states, in a post on X. "Like many of us, she learned the value of hard work and service to the people at her kitchen table. Weems's photographs examine the critical role that the kitchen table plays in life's biggest moments."

Mark Skidmore, CEO of the media and communications strategies firm Assemble the Agency, and Gina Belafonte, director and CEO of the creative social justice nonprofit Sankofa, were credited for the ad concept. Neither Skidmore nor Belafonte immediately responded to *Hyperallergic's* request for comment.



Left: Carrie Mae Weems, "Untitled (Eating Lobster)" (1990), *Kitchen Table Series*, gelatin silver print
Right: Carrie Mae Weems, "Untitled (Man Reading Newspaper)" (1990), *Kitchen Table Series*, gelatin silver print