Black History Month: Photographer Nona Faustine Pays Tribute To Black Women Who Were Slaves

February 2, 2016 2:36 PM

NEW YORK (CBSNewYork)—Photographer Nona Faustine’s subject is the black female body: naked, objectified, and vulnerable.

Faustine was inspired by daguerreotypes taken of plantation slaves in 1850.

“You can’t say that anger is not a part of creating this work,” Faustine told WCBS 880’s Jane Tillman Irving.

The body in this work is her own... heavy, fleshy, clad in white high-heeled shoes, and wrist shackles.

Faustine posed surrogates in a pre-revolutionary Dutch cemetery in Brooklyn, where three favored slaves were “honored” by being buried with their owners.

“Front, back, and side, life-sized cutout images of myself,” she said.

The images are faceless, representing their anonymity. Faustine said the images form a memorial among the tombstones for the countless enslaved black women.

Faustine’s photographs, called “White Shoes,” are on display at the Smack Mellon gallery in Brooklyn and can be found online at http://nonafaustine.virb.com.