


BLACK ROCK | SENEGAL



Encounters

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On Encounters and Encountering

The exhibition '*Encounters*' explores how we physically or metaphorically encounter people, places, and spaces. It also represents the idea of unexpected experiences and chance encounters.

Franz Fanon's work, including "Black Skins White Masks," explores how encounters are deeply connected to geography. In the context of colonialism, the experience of encountering others illuminates the relationship between space, place, mobility, and liberation. Fanon's views on the power of encounters to generate liberatory insights are also highlighted in his writing. Through encounters, Fanon can understand how his imagination and psyche interact with the physical geographies surrounding him, which restores the world from a black sense of place. At this moment, we are faced with many critical questions regarding the visual arts and cultures, both historical and contemporary, as well as theories and methods of analysis calling for a restructuring like Fanon observed. Despite this uncertainty, this exhibition seeks to create new opportunities for collaboration and connection in the visual arts, encouraging encounters between diverse ways of thinking, doing, and making.

How do people stay with us even when they are physically gone? Does every encounter count? How does one immerse oneself in the memories of past and present encounters and then conclude that they had, at a point, touched one's life? How does one preserve memories? An encounter embodies people, places, and memories but can lead to confrontation or opposition. In this group exhibition, a product of Black Rock Senegal's annual residency programme, artworks and artists unite to create a space for conversation, new associations, and indeed, encounters.

Encounters showcases diverse artworks, including painting, sculpture, installation, photography, print, drawing, and film. It features the Black Rock Senegal alum resident artists between 2022 and 2024. The exhibition broadly refers to encounters and demonstrates how to encounter material and the world in art, anchored to a particular time and place. Each artist presents a unique perspective, revealing their engagement with the prevailing issues of the past and present, where ideas collide, contrast, fuse, and merge.

The exhibition is presented in various themed groupings based on the medium, drawing inspiration from experiences in Dakar during residency periods over the past two years. Throughout art history, **"The Body"** continues to represent identity aspects such as gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity. Nowadays, the body is not fixed and is considered fragile, unruly, and fragmented. Ousmane Bâ's figurative compositions capture the body's many gestures. Using collage that emerges from a cultural combination of artistic traditions and aesthetic languages from Western, Japanese, and West African art, he gives life a different kind of imagery, bringing us into his universe filled with serenity, peace and harmony.

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At the same time, Stephen Hayes creates woodcuts, sculptures, and installations of various sizes using found materials to explore how America has exploited black bodies, black minds, and black labor. Souleye Fall also works with found materials, creating assemblages from discarded waste that explore themes like diaspora, post-apocalypse, utopia, identity, notions of masculinity, Africanisms, and Afro-futurism. Fall is also interested in the ways trade is prevalent in an exchange of culture.

Makhone Issa Diop sculpts bodies exclusively in bronze using the lost-wax technique passed down by his father, Issa Mahone Diop, a recognized sculptor and master of the casting technique. Mae-Ling Lokko addresses architecture associated with extraction (human labor) in her *Handprints* series, a wall made of hemp mycelium panels, kenaf mycelium panels, cotton, and wool.

Painting is an ever-expanding and evolving medium, evident in the variety of responses to the question **"What is painting?"** proposed by several artists. Ngimbi Bakambana's painting series explores the sub-theme "Senghorian Négritude," probing cultural identity, confinement, and being boxed in. He searches for identity in both physical and psychological spaces, highlighting everyday objects to tell stories of love and conflict. Nicolas Lambelet Coleman, on the other hand, works from an autobiographical lens, primarily using self-portraiture and still life. His paintings depict rich patterns, color, and painterly brushwork, combining his subtle introspection with an energetic artistic boldness.

During his time in Dakar, Ardeshir Tabrizi found inspiration in the ocean and the Lebou community's connection to it. He was also influenced by filmmaker Chase Johnson's documentary film project on the Lebou and gained knowledge from this research. His paintings depict the histories of forced migration referenced by the sails of slave ships from the Transatlantic slave trade and the ongoing migrations of Senegalese and other African citizens who attempt to cross the Atlantic in boats, carrying with them their dreams and aspirations, yet often end in fatal journeys.

For Khalif Tahir Thompson, portraiture and figuration are central to representing subjects, including family, friends, and cultural figures framed by constructed settings rendered in oil paint and incorporating mixed media, including collage and handmade paper. Nengi Omuku paints ethereal figures on sanyan, a Nigerian fabric, using a unique technique of layering oil paint. Her paintings feature colorful figures set against celestial landscapes inspired by nature. She draws on her mother's work as a florist and gardener, using her paintings' complementary colors and horticultural themes. Paul Verdell's abstract compositions are created by modifying and reflecting the artist's emotions about life, nature, and color. The result is a luminous and wild expanse of pigment, forging expressive landscape-like paintings that blur the boundaries between figuration and abstraction. Finally, Pamela Castro paints from a position inspired by working with affection, her relationships with others, and a broader sense of belonging.

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Contemporary perspectives on textiles are explored through various approaches by Adrian L. Burrell, Gouled Ahmed, Ayan Farah, Enam Gbewonyo, and Samuel Nnorom. Enam Gbewonyo's *DELLU* series comprises two textile works and a film that examines the impact of French colonization on Senegalese women and their histories and traditions. Nature plays a significant role in the work, inspired by the backdrops of rituals in the film. The textiles and film serve as remnants of the ritual act, creating safe spaces for Senegal's daughters to seek solace and give praise to their mothers. Samuel Nnorom continues using pre-loved Ankara (Dutch) Wax fabrics, addressing textile recycling and the social conditions of the material over time. He creates intricate constellations through sewing, tying, and cutting, often on monumental scales. His latest work is inspired by the fisherman's net, which serves as a metaphor for connection, unity, capture, containment, distribution, and provision, enabling humans to thrive in their environment. The textile pieces are made from African-Dutch wax print fabric, fishing rope, and textile ink. They result from Nnorom's research into Senegalese fishing culture and its historical ties to transatlantic and colonial trade. Gouled Ahmed's new tapestry, *A Tapestry of Hope: Genesis I*, features indigenous quilting and embroidery techniques from the Horn of Africa. It also includes the artist's self-portrait, family photos, and cyanotypes of native flora on Ethiopian silk and cotton. Using pigments sourced from natural materials, such as Indigo leaves (*Indigofera Tinctoria*) collected in Senegal, rust from a previously contaminated site in her hometown of Stockholm, and laterite clay from a site outside of Dakar, Ayan Farah is guided by the use of pigments intricately layered on antique linen and hemp to manifest themselves visually. Farah is inspired by the agency of natural materials that hold history and memory, particularly the contrast between textiles' inherent geopolitics and domesticity. Adrian L. Burrell utilizes photography, installation, textiles, and experimental media to examine issues of race, class, and intergenerational dynamics. He actively invites moments where collective Storytelling could be a site for remembering.

Film and Photography have a rich and fascinating history, accompanied by diverse theories and aesthetics. This has led to a thriving community of artists constantly pushing these mediums' boundaries, exploring themes including the intersection of race, history, environmentalism, spirituality and identity through a deeply personal lens. Sophia Nahli Allison's installation encompassing film and photography traverses multiple realms of possibility as she reimagines and excavates spiritual archives. Her work documents the metaphysical existence of Black women to render impressions of the past, present, and future.

Chinwe Chigbu is a photographer who often explores personal and shared experiences. She aims to break down female stereotypes and highlight the African female experience. Her photographs have a painterly quality that creates a sense of beauty and strangeness. Ange-Frédéric Koffi delves into the intricate connections between movement, travel, and wandering in the history and practice of Photography. The images presented in this series are rooted in Vilém Flusser's concept of Photography and digital imaging as methods of translation and abstraction. They comprise digital scans of books, colored transparencies, various papers, and the artist's photographic prints and battlefields of colonial subjugation. Kwabena Appiah-Nti focuses on boyhood, early manhood, and

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Blackness. He documents communities facing social prejudices, eliminating clichés. His first significant project, *Golden Boy*, celebrates Black boys and young men by capturing their behaviors and interests, showing their pride and beauty. Amina Kadous' film and photography installation, *One Brick at a Time*, bears witness to the ongoing demolition of old buildings in Cairo. Through her work, the artist metaphorically portrays the crumbling city of Cairo, which has been dismantled and rebuilt over the centuries. As Kadous observes these changes, she captures the disappearing landmarks, serving as a reminder of the city's rich history and the impermanence of all things. Timothy Yannick Hunter's style involves a combination of exploration and instruction to reveal the cultural, political, and social diversity of the Black diaspora. He frequently engages in speculative storytelling, exploring the meeting points of physical and digital realms. Léonard Pongo combines snapshot, diary, and abstract Photography with installations, mixed media, and film to explore the Congolese land, cultures, philosophies, and crafts, challenging perceptions of the DRC and the continent. Filmmakers Lilah Benetti and Chase Johnson delve into African and diasporic cultures, which are influenced by the people, beliefs, and landscapes of West Africa. Benetti's latest film focuses on traditional spirituality in the region, while Johnson's *The Dead Are Not Dead* is inspired by his time spent in Senegal observing Lebou Culture. The movie explores interconnected scenes that blend history, spirituality, and the healing essence of water.

Poetic, experimental, enigmatic, and sometimes familiar, each work offers opportunities to resonate unexpectedly with each other and the audiences who will visit the exhibition. In bringing together a selection of current and past artists-in-residence connecting multiple perspectives, histories, and wide-ranging areas of interest, *Encounters* surveys artists of different generations working globally and from a broad range of social and cultural backgrounds. These artists spent time in Senegal, developing their practice beyond their usual work settings and accessing material, interpersonal, and professional resources while engaging with local communities.

Encounters throws up the question of how our encounters shape how art is made and our experiences of it. It also involves layered reactions to ideas, personal personalities, cultures and politics, stylistic considerations, and varied histories.

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Participating artists: Gouled Ahmed, Sophia Nahli Allison, Ousmane Bâ, Ngimbi Bakambana, Lilah Benetti, Adrian L. Burrell, Pamela Castro, Nicolas Lambelet Coleman, Chinwe Chigbu, Souleye Fall, Ayan Farah, Enam Gbewonyo, Stephen Hayes, Timothy Yanick Hunter, Ange-Frédéric Koffi, Diop Makhone Issa, Chase Johnson, Amina Kadous, Mae-ling Lokko, Samuel Nnorom, Kwabena Appiah-Nti, Nengi Omuku, Léonard Pongo, Maurice Carlos Ruffin, Khalif Tahir Thompson, Keith Tutt II, Ardeshir Tabrizi and Paul Verdell

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Participating Artists

Gouled Ahmed

(Born in 1992 Djibouti City, Djibouti; lives and works in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

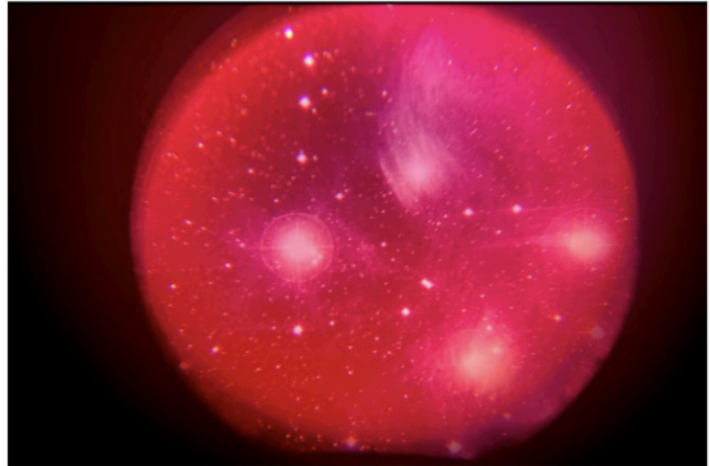


Gouled Ahmed, *This Year I Vow to Make a Monument of This Body*, 2023, Tapestry

Gouled Ahmed is an Addis Ababa-based Somali visual artist, stylist, costume designer and director. Their work explores the themes of memory and belonging through the lens of self-portrait photography, self-fashioning and textile art. Their ongoing self-portrait series *Our Earth Will Remember Us Again Someday* and *One Day These Names Will Be Ours* explore the gaps that exist within formal language in the understanding and contextualization of gender expressions that exist outside of the binary. Gouled's work deals with the notion of futurity and is heavily aimed at envisioning new and equitable aesthetic futures for the Horn of Africa. Gouled is a recipient of the African Cultural Fund's inaugural grant and the Prince Claus Fund's inaugural Seed Award. In 2021 they collaborated with Bristol-based Somali poet, director and visual artist Asmaa Jama on *Before We Disappear*, an interactive moving image piece commissioned by BBC Arts as a costume designer and model. Gouled also collaborated on the experimental film *The Season of Burning Things* with Jama commissioned by the Bristol Old Vic Theater as a co-director. The piece was screened last November at the Venice Architecture Biennale in collaboration with the Goethe Institut and Theater Neumarkt's 100 Ways to Say We program. Most recently, Gouled was also featured in the documentary *The Ones Who Keep Walking*, a film commissioned by Johnnie Walker, to share the stories of twenty rising creatives and boundary-pushers from the African continent. They are also part of the upcoming group exhibition at the V&A Museum entitled *Africa Fashion*.

Sophia Nahli Allison

(Born in 1987, Los Angeles, USA; lives and works in Los Angeles, USA)



Sophia Nahli Allison, *i am expansive*, 2024, *i am expansive*, 2024, 35 mm slide in a photographic light box

Sophia Nahli Allison is an Academy Award® nominated filmmaker and photographer. As a black queer radical dreamer, she reimagines the archives by excavating hidden truths. A meditation of the spirit, her work conjures ancestral memories, mysticism, and abstraction to explore the intersection of fiction and non-fiction storytelling. Sophia was a 2020 United States Artists Fellow, a 2014 Chicago 3Arts Awardee and has held residencies at MacDowell, The Camargo Foundation in Cassis, France, POV's African Interactive Art Residency, and The Center for Photography, Woodstock. She earned a Master's degree in visual communication and a Bachelor's in photojournalism. Sophia received a 2021 Academy Award nomination for her short experimental documentary *A Love Song For Latasha* (2019), of which she was the director, cinematographer, editor, and producer. Recently, she directed and co-wrote the 2021 HBO Max original documentary *Eyes on the Prize: Hallowed Ground*. Sophia is currently working on her ongoing self-portrait series *Dreaming Gave Us Wings* and developing a dark comedy series with her creative partner.

Kwabena Sekyi Appiah-nti

(Born in 1994, Lelystad, the Netherlands; lives and works in Amsterdam, the Netherlands)



Kwabena Sekyi Appiah-nti, *Untitled, Golden boy Senegal*, 2024, Image transfer on bottle

Kwabena Sekyi Appiah-nti aka Sekyi, (Belgian & Ghanaian, Dutch-born, b.1994) is a photographer based in Amsterdam working across the genres of documentary and fashion. In 2017, Kwabena completed his studies in communication and multimedia design. It was at this point that he decided to pursue his true passion: photography. During the initial years of his journey as an image-maker, he developed a keen interest in individuals who are often unfairly judged and negatively perceived, particularly during their boyhood period. Kwabena believes that these social groups are frequently depicted stereotypically, leading to misunderstandings. He aims to delve into their worlds and capture their behaviors to authentically document the essence of his subjects.

Ousmane Bâ

(Born in 1988, Strasbourg, France; lives and works in Tokyo, Japan)



Ousmane Bâ, *Discordance*, 2024, Japanese ink, Japanese pigment on canvas
145 cm X 230 cm

Ousmane Bâ is a French visual artist, born and raised in Strasbourg, where he earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts from L'Institut Supérieur des Arts Appliqués. His artistic practice primarily revolves around drawing, painting, and collage. He has always had an interest in Japanese art, which is why he moved to Japan in 2017 to develop his style and technique, immersing himself in a new philosophy and vision of the world. He predominantly works with Japanese mineral pigments and ink, drawing inspiration from calligraphy and Japanese printmaking techniques. He has participated in exhibitions at various Japanese galleries such as Studio Gross, Fukagawa Garage, and Trunk Hotel. Most recently, his work was showcased at the Dakar Biennale 2022 and 1:54 New York.

Lilah Benetti

(Born in 1988, Melbourne, Australia, lives and works in Melbourne, Australia)



Lilah Benetti, *Les Sommes de Nous (The Some of Us)*, 2024
Audio Visual, Experimental Film, Super 8, Mini DV

Born in Naarm (Melbourne, Australia), Lilah Benetti is an international award-winning and critically acclaimed Artist and Filmmaker. Lilah considers their work to be auto-ethnographic; an amalgamation of their personal experiences interwoven within broader social and cultural histories, foregrounding Black Queer identities. Through film they also delve into the world of fiction to illuminate lost and obscured narratives, exploring contemporary forms of resistance in the pursuit of self-determination. With observations from our pre-colonial past, Lilah's work is often speculative, imaginative and attentive to our immediate futures, recognising that Black Futurism and Queer Futurity are both near and tangible and require a collective agency to build our utopias. The basis of Lilah's work is rooted in visual imaging, considering the boundaries of both the still and moving image as fluid and porous to push the medium's possibilities through scale, method and presentation. Lilah graduated from LaSalle International Art and Design College and has since completed residencies at the MQBMBQ (My Queer Blackness My Black Queerness) Villa Lena (Italy 2022), the Centre for Projection Art (Australia 2023) and received the Honorable Mention at Berlinale (Germany 2022). In 2024, Lilah is set to showcase their work in several major international exhibitions.

Adrian Burrell

(Born in 1990, Oakland, USA; lives and works in Oakland, USA)

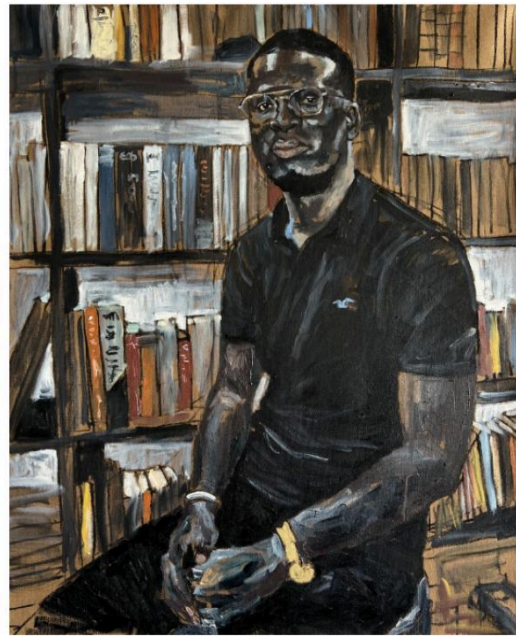


Adrian Burrell, *Antonia*, 2023, Archival Carbon print on textile, 120 x 96 x ½ in, edition 2/3

Adrian Burrell is a third-generation Oakland artist working across photography, film, installation and experimental media. His work examines issues of race, class, gender, and intergenerational dynamics to invite moments where collective storytelling can be a site for remembering. His photographic series *"It's After the End of the World, Don't You Know That Yet?"*, a collective self-portrait that examines normalized violence inflicted on Black lives, was acquired for SFMOMA's permanent collection in 2021. His work has been featured at SXSW (2013), Photoville in New York City (2020), Pingyao International Photography Festival in China (2020), BlackStar Film Festival (2022), and in *The New Yorker* (2022). Burrell was the S.F. Camerawork Juror's Choice Award recipient (2019) and a YBCA Creative Cohort fellow (2021-22). Burrell has lived and worked on four continents, he is a US Marine Corps veteran, a graduate of the San Francisco Art Institute with a BFA in film and Stanford University with an MFA from the Department of Art & Art History, where he lectured and served as the Black Graduate Student Community Outreach Chair. He is currently a visiting artist with Stanford's Institute for Diversity in the Arts and a resident at SFFILM.

Panmela Castro

(Born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; lives and works in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)

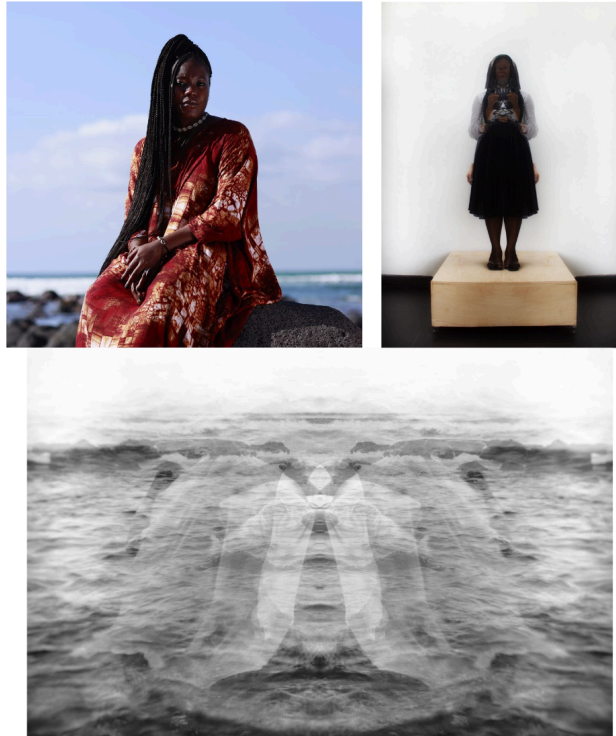


Panmela Castro, *Momo, the French teacher*, from the series, *Affective Drift Dakar*, 2023, oil on linen

Panmela Castro is a visual artist dedicated to the practice of performance, whose focus in her work is what she calls “*an incessant search for affection*”. Her practice, created from relations of alterity and issues related to the sense of belonging, unfolds in memories in different media, such as painting, video, photography, objects, and installations, among others. From her permanent residence in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Castro moves through cities as a flaneur, in what she calls an affective drift, leaving contributions to the development of new affective bonds up to chance, and thereby also opening up new affective relationships with art.

Chinwe Chigbu

(Born in 1994, Port Harcourt, Nigeria; lives and works in Lagos, Nigeria)



Top right: Chinwe Chigbu, *Faith I*, 2024, photography, 50 cm x 76 cm

Bottom: Chinwe Chigbu, *Death I*, photography, 72 x 48 cm

Chinwe Chigbu is an experimental artist from Abia State, Nigeria. She began as a documentary/street photographer and then explored abstraction through photography and experimental media. Her works are abstract and conceptual, revolving around themes of identity politics, the black female body, duality, mysticism, environmentalism, contemporary society and culture. In her own words: "My works come from my daily life and are attempts to make sense of the world or environment around me. They are representations of my ideas, thoughts, experiences, pain, happiness, fears, wishes and dreams for a new world". Chinwe is inspired by the Cosmos (Universe), Mother Nature and human nature. She is an artist who uses art as a tool or means of freedom through self-expression to encourage individuals to be regardless of race, gender, societal norms, structures and conditions. His work is featured in international exhibitions, including the Latitude Art Fair in South Africa and the Kuenyehia Prize exhibition in Accra, Ghana. Chigbu holds a BA in International Relations from Les Cours Sonou University, (2016) Republic of Benin.

Nicolas Lambelet Coleman

(Born in 1998, Durham, North Carolina, USA; lives and works in Cambridge, USA)



Nicolas Lambelet Coleman, *This Ocean Brought Us Here*, 2024, Oil on canvas

Nicolas Lambelet Coleman (b. 1998, North Carolina), is a painter who currently lives and works in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He holds a BA in visual art and political science from Duke University. Coleman has had recent solo exhibitions at Thierry Goldberg (New York NY) and Steve Turner (Los Angeles, CA) with a forthcoming solo exhibition at PM/AM (London, England). His work has also been presented at recent additions of the 1-54 Contemporary African Art fair in Marrakech (2023) and New York (2022). Coleman's work is largely autobiographical, primarily using self-portraiture and still life to depict scenes from his life. Whether at home or in a foreign land, Coleman approaches his subject with a curiosity about the intersection of self-conception and one's environment. Drawn to rich patterns, color, and painterly brushwork, Coleman combines his subtle introspection with an energetic artistic boldness. Ultimately, Coleman aims to use himself as a kaleidoscopic subject that reflects and honors the universality of the human condition.

Makhone Issa Diop

(Born in 1987, Diourbel, Senegal; lives and works in Dakar, Senegal)



Makhone Diop, *Joggi jéggi*, 2024, Bronze, 104 cm x 70 x 60

Makhone Issa Diop, born 25 September 1987 in Diourbel is a bronze sculptor. Trained under the watchful eye of his father, Issa K. DIOP, renowned artist Makhone inherits 60 years of art and thus becomes his successor and perpetuates the family legacy. Makhone Issa DIOP is a plastic artist sculptor on bronze at the Village des Arts in Dakar, he is a perfectionist who attends to every detail. He is undoubtedly a witness of his time but he is also a narrator of the time of the other. This thirst for others will lead him to be interested in the Maasai of Kenya. From these wanderings will be born great achievements such as the “Massai dance” “Massai warrior” etc... His works obey the same impulse of love that is made of living and sublimation of the beautiful. The years of happiness and childlike carelessness will give rise to a healthy nostalgia materialized by a sublime series of children’s games such as *the wheelbarrow*, *Leapfrog* and also Senegalese Wrestlers. He is also an ardent defender of African culture.

Souleye Fall

(Born in 1994, Washington, D.C., USA; lives and works in Philadelphia, USA)



Souleye Fall, *INANUTSHELL*, 2024, Cement bags, found objects, green backdrop paper, aluminum, pearls, monitor screen, basket

Souleye Fall is a Senegalese-American artist who makes videos, sculptures, sounds, paintings and situations that consider feeling and body knowledge as agents of escapism. He uses his experience in cosplay, world-building, and speculative fiction found in gameplay and manga as a way to conceptualize immersive settings. His works question how systems of power condition reality and how black diasporas navigate, reimagine and refigure them to adapt. His practice is rooted in improvisation, material iteration, and malleable structures. He works with videos on monitors, cardboard, clothing and wood that are frequently salvaged or recycled. Through using methods like weaving and sewing he threads together and binds the universes he combines. Fall is fascinated with the ways art could be embedded in everyday life. He activates common materials to create strategies and backdrops for joy and immersive experiences. Fall echoes the virtual and the physical as a way to source the black imaginary. DEAD PIXEL, as in the screen on the monitor – a malfunction from a single-pixel creates a black dot. DP is installed to destabilize and conjure.

Ayan Farah

(Born in 1978, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates; lives and works in Stockholm, Sweden)



Ayan Farah, *The Heliacal Rising I*, 2022, Rust and India ink on Linen, 250cm x 200cm

Ayan Farah works with found materials and earth pigments. Her work utilizes land as its medium and it is the predominant subject of her practice. The work combines aspects of abstract painting and land art with techniques found in both West and East African art and craft, using materials consisting of historical textiles predating the Industrial Revolution and industrially spun linen and hemp from domestic settings. These materials often traded between Europe and its colonies reflect her interest in colonial trade history and the traces it has left on the land and the population of these locations. She collects clay and mud on-site and grows plants and flowers for pigments both outdoors and under lights in her studio. Her interests are in the environmental, the industrialization of ancient crops, and man's impact on the land. Her works that are painted and dyed with these pigments reflect on personal history, the geographical location of the source material, and the place of production. Socio-cultural concepts and geological properties as well as the aspect of mobility imbue the work with an ephemeral quality that manifests the passing of time.

Enam Gbewonyo

(Born in 1980, London, UK; lives and works in London, UK)



Center: Enam Gbewonyo, *Suuf (Earth) Altar I*, 2023

Right: Enam Gbewonyo, *Ndox (Water) Altar I*, 2023

Enam Gbewonyo is a British Ghanaian textile and performance artist whose practice investigates identity, womanhood, and humanity while advocating the healing benefits of craft. She uses performance as a vessel, creating live spaces of healing that deliver the collective consciousness to a positive place of awareness. Using craft as her portal she pushes audiences to face the truth of a dark past and the emotions it brings forth. Thus bringing them to a point of spiritual awareness both of self and humanity. Gbewonyo is also an emerging curator and founder of the Black British Female Artist (BBFA) Collective – a platform that supports a group of emerging black women artists and advocates for inclusivity.

Stephen Hayes

(Born in 1983, Durham, North Carolina, USA; lives and works in Durham, North Carolina, USA)

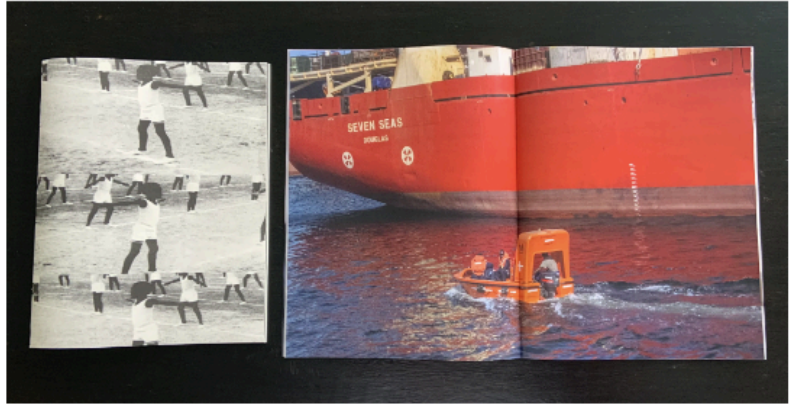


Stephen Hayes, *Submerged*, 2023, Sculpture

Stephen Hayes grew up in Durham with his older brother, Spence, and his mother, Lender, who were pivotal in shaping and sparking his creative approach. When Hayes was in first grade, he broke a remote-control car. His brother took it apart and attached the motor to a battery, bringing it back to life. Amazed, Hayes began breaking all kinds of things to see how they worked and what he could create with the pieces. By second grade, his mother had given him a real workbench; she and Hayes' brother would also bring home abandoned equipment for tinkering. Hayes earned a Master of Fine Arts in sculpture at Savannah College of Art and Design in Atlanta. His thesis exhibition, "Cash Crop," has been travelling and exhibiting for over a decade. Hayes uses three symbols: a pawn, a corn, and a horse to explore America's use (or misuse) of black bodies, black minds, and black labor. Artists, he believes, are as much translators as they are creators. Hayes is currently an Assistant Professor of the Practice of Art, Art History & Visual Studies at Duke University. He recently created a monument for the Colored Troops that marched through Wilmington, NC. "Boundless" was unveiled on November 13, 2021.

Timothy Yanick Hunter

(Born in 1990, Toronto, Canada, lives and works in Toronto, Canada)



Timothy Yanick Hunter, True And Functional (Extended), 2023, Two Channel Video, 5:08 min

Timothy Yanick Hunter is a multidisciplinary artist and curator. Hunter's practice employs strategies of bricolage, archival exploration, reference, citation, and exploring remix as practice. His approach alternates between exploratory and didactic, with a focus on the political, cultural and social richness of the Black diaspora. Hunter's work often delves into speculative narratives and the intersections of physical space, digital space and the intangible. His practice synthesizes music, sound, video and image making. He was included in the 2022 Toronto Biennial of Art and longlisted for the 2022 Sobey Art Award. He has exhibited nationally and internationally at the Center for Art, Research and Alliances, New York (2023), Bamako Encounters – African Biennale of Photography, Bamako (2022), Cooper Cole, Toronto (2022), Gallery 44, Toronto (2021); and A Space Gallery, Toronto (2020); among others. Hunter lives and works in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Chase Alexander Johnson

(Born in 1995, California, USA, lives and works in Los Angeles, USA)



Chase Alexander Johnson, Excerpt from *The Dead Are Not Dead*, Film, Shot in 2023, edited 2024

Chase is a writer from Los Angeles, who draws inspiration from West Africa's Griot tradition and the folkloric traditions of Americans of African and Indigenous descent. He captures the essence of humanity through narratives that reflect complex identities and challenge conventional perspectives. Chase explores the "gray areas" of our collective experience to reimagine future generations. With a Creative Writing background from USC, he skillfully weaves tales that speak to the diversity of human experience, past and present.

Amina Kadous

(Born in 1991, Cairo, Egypt; lives and works in Cairo, Egypt)



Amina Kadous, *One Brick at a Time, Diptych 1*, 2023, image transfer on red brick

Amina Kadous received her Bachelor in Fine Arts from Tufts University and The School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Her work tackles concepts of memory and identity. She believes in the ephemerality of experience. She believes a Photograph is an object that holds memories and meanings, keepsakes that give life. Her work is a linkage between the past and present through the layers of time as they fold and unfold. The exploration of time serves, for her, as a means of understanding who she is as a person. Characterizing herself as an explorer of ideas, she is driven by the spirit of inquiry as she seeks to comprehend the meanings and hidden ambiguities of lives, not her own, through the interactive nature of viewer, photographer, object and environment. She is driven by experience as a woman and an Egyptian. That is her signature: her work, like time, evolves. Her work has been exhibited internationally. She participated in the 12th edition of the Bamako Biennale of Photography and was awarded the Centre Soleil d'Afrique Prize for her project, "*A Crack in the Memory of My Memory*". She was awarded a grant from Magnum Foundation and Prince Claus Foundation, was one of the top ten finalists for the Everyday Projects grant for her current ongoing project "*White Gold*," and was shortlisted this year for the Contemporary African Photography Prize.

Ange-Frédéric Koffi

(Born in 1996, Korhogo Côte d'Ivoire)

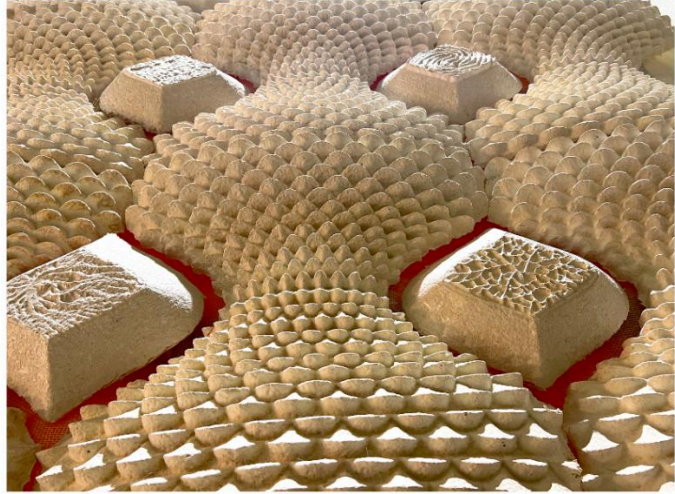


Ange-Frédéric Koffi, *First proposition - word, image & myth I*, 2023, Hahnemühle Baryta paper print, Lamination Raw baguette frame, charcoal tinted, 60 cm x 80 cm

Ange-Frédéric Koffi was born in Korhogo, in the north of the Ivory Coast. He explores the complex articulations of movement, travel and wandering within the history and practice of photography. He applies contemporary postcolonial reflections through various forms and devices in the public sphere to generate a social impact. His work freely crosses disciplines as diverse as political history, exhibition history, anthropology and design. A graduate of the Sorbonne, the Haute Ecole des Arts du Rhin (HEAR) and the Ecole Cantonale d'Art de Lausanne (ECAL), Ange-Frédéric was recently nominated for the FOAM 2022 awards (Amsterdam) and has just completed a residency at Zeitz Mocaa (Cape Town).

Mae-ling Lokko

(Born in Taif, Saudi Arabia; lives and works in Accra, Ghana)



Mae-Ling Lokko, *Handprints 2*, 2024, Hemp fibers, cotton wool, mycelium, 188 cm x 99 cm

Mae-ling Lokko is a biomaterials designer and educator from Ghana and the Philippines who works with agro-waste and renewable biobased materials. Through her work, Lokko explores themes of “*generative justice*” through the development of new models of distributed production and collaboration. Often her work deconstructs historical narratives and sites of extraction through new material vocabularies and fragmented architectural installations. Lokko is the founder of Willow based in Accra, Ghana focused on the design of biobased materials across architecture, agriculture, and food systems. Lokko holds a Ph.D. and Master of Science in Architectural Science from the Center of Architecture, Science and Ecology, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and B.A from Tufts University. Her work was nominated for the Visible Award 2019, Royal Academy Dorfman Award 2020 and she was a finalist for the Hublot Design Prize 2019. Lokko’s recent projects have been exhibited at the Stedelijk Museum, Netherlands; Museum of the Future, Dubai; Z33 House for Contemporary Art, Design and Architecture, Belgium; Sonsbeek Biennial, Netherlands; Somerset House, Triennale Milano, Italy, Somerset House, London, Radialsystem, Berlin, Luma Foundation, Arles, 4th Istanbul Design Biennial, Rhode Island School of Design, and at the Royal Institute of British Architects-North.

Ngimbi Bakambana Luve

(Born in 1977, in Kinshasa, DRC; lives and works in Paris, France)



Ngimbi Bakambana, *Mysterious blue room*, 2023, Acrylic on canvas, 200 cm x 200 cm

Ngimbi (Luve) Bakambana was born in Kinshasa, DRC in 1977 and trained at L'Academie des Beaux-Arts, Kinshasa. He is also educated in music at the Conservatoire de Nanterre, France. Bakambana is among the first of his generation to have exhibited with the 'masters' of Congolese art such as Mavinga, Chéri Samba, Nginamau, Lema Kusa, Liyolo, Botembe, François Tamba Ndembe in DRC and Germany. François Tamba Ndembe, one of the foremost Congolese sculptors, forward thinkers and the most affected artist by the shapes and mastery of his composition, mentored Bakambana. In his expressionistic approach to art, Bakambana leverages color to intimate what words express in verbal communication. He is inspired by the social context of his native Congo which serves to express his thoughts and understanding of the world through colors. Bakambana's paintings are a form of pictorial sociology of the SAPE1 culture centered in the two Congos, and which is reminiscent of Dandy and Rudeboy cultures found elsewhere.

Samuel Nnorom

(Born in 1990, Abia State, Nigeria; lives and works in Jos-north, Nigeria)



Samuel Nnorom, *Holding on a Little Longer*, 2023, African print fabric, fishnet, rope, second-hand clothes, 108 cm x 120 cm x 46 cm

Samuel Nnorom is a multi-award-winning artist whose work poetically crosses tapestry-like sculpture and pre-loved fabric. Since early childhood, elements that now shape his contemporary practice have surrounded him: colorful scraps from his mother's tailoring workshop crystallized his artistic vocation. Self-proclaimed "custodian of material culture", Nnorom uniquely draws upon materiality, dedicating his art to textile recycling and a sociological reflection on the human condition. Currently living and working in Nsukka, Samuel Nnorom holds an MFA in sculpture from the University of Nigeria. He cumulates numerous solo shows, group exhibitions and residencies in the United Kingdom, Africa, Mexico, Portugal, Italy, Canada, and the United States. He was named the overall winner of the annual international art initiative Art for Change Global Prize 2022. Samuel is interested in the politics that used clothes/second-hand/cast-off fabrics play on human conditions. Through stitching of overlaid clothes and tying of criss-cross fabric straps across the surface like a bale of imported used clothes suggest limitations caused by neo-colonialism, fast fashion, consumerism, poor political decisions, environmental waste and the negative economic impact on the development of our local textile industry.

Nengi Omuku

(Born in 1987, Warri, Nigeria; lives and works in Lagos, Nigeria)

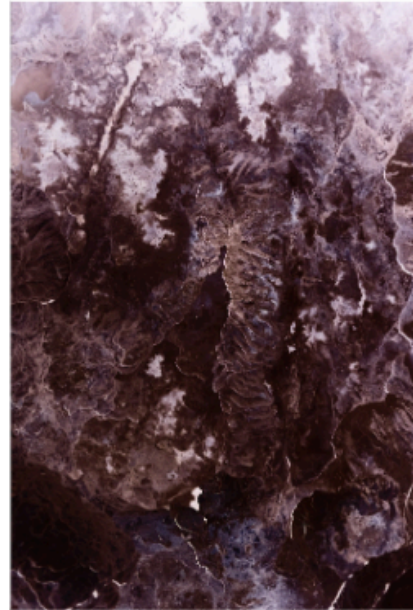


Nengi Omuku, *Untitled*, 2023, Oil on Sanyan, 200 cm x 124 cm

Nengi Omuku received her BA (2010) and MA (2012) from the Slade School of Art, University College London. Recent solo exhibitions include *Parables of Joy*, Pippy Houldsworth Gallery (2022); *Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery*, London and Berlin (2020-2021); *Stages of Collapse*, September Gray, Atlanta (2017); *A State of Mind*, Omenka Gallery, Lagos (2015). Recent group exhibitions include *What Lies Beneath: Women, Politics, Textiles*, Women's Art Collection, Murray Edwards College, Cambridge (2021-2022); *Dissolving Realms*, curated by Katy Hessel, Kasmin Gallery, New York (2022); *Self-Addressed*, curated by Kehinde Wiley at Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles, USA (2021); *The Invincible Hands*, Yemisi Shyllon Museum of Art, Lagos, Nigeria (2021); *Karim Kal and Nengi Omuku*, La Galerie, Contemporary art Center, Noisy-le-Sec (2021); *Dancing in Dark Times*, Pippy Houldsworth Gallery, London, UK (2021). Omuku's work is also included in the collections of HSBC Art Collection, Beth Rudin DeWoody Collection, Loewe Art Collection, Monsoon Art Collection, Dawn Art Collection, Women's Art Collection, Easton Capital Collection and the Azman Museum.

Léonard Pongo

(Born in 1988, Belgium; lives and works in Brussels, Belgium)

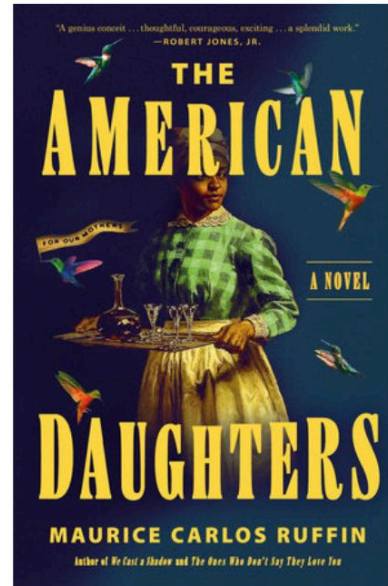


Léonard Pongo, *Untitled*, from the series *Primordial Earth*, 2022

Léonard Pongo is a photographer and visual artist. His long-term project *"The Uncanny"* has earned him several international awards and worldwide recognition. Pongo's work has been published worldwide and featured in numerous exhibitions including the recent IncarNations at the Bozar Center for Fine Arts curated by Kendell Geers & Sindika Dokolo and the 3rd Beijing Photo Biennial at CAFA Art Museum. He was chosen as one of PDN's 30 New and Emerging Photographers to Watch in 2016, is a recipient of the Visura Grant 2017, the Getty Reportage Grant 2018 and participated in the Joop Swart Masterclass 2018. *"Primordial Earth"*, his latest project, was shown at the Lubumbashi Biennale and at the Rencontres de Bamako where it was awarded the *"Prix de l'OIF"*, and exhibited at the Brussels Centre for Fine Arts for his first institutional solo show in Belgium in 2021. His career is shared between his long-term projects in Congo DR, teaching and assignment work. Pongo is also a member of The Photographic Collective's advisory board. His work is part of institutional and private collections.

Maurice Carlos Ruffin

(Born in New Orleans, USA; lives and works in New Orleans, USA)



Maurice Carlos Ruffins, *The American Daughters*, 2024

Maurice Carlos Ruffin is the author of the forthcoming historical novel, *The American Daughters*, which will be published in 2024 by One World Random House. He also wrote *The Ones Who Don't Say They Love You*, which was published by One World Random House in August 2021. It is the 2023 One Book One New Orleans selection. The book was a New York Times Editor's Choice, a finalist for the Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence and longlisted for the Story Prize. His first book, *We Cast a Shadow*, was a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award, the Dayton Literary Peace Prize, and the PEN America Open Book Prize. It was longlisted for the 2021 DUBLIN Literary Award, the Center for Fiction Prize, and the Aspen Words Literary Prize. The novel was also a New York Times Editor's Choice. Ruffin is the winner of several literary prizes, including the Iowa Review Award in fiction and the William Faulkner–William Wisdom Creative Writing Competition Award for Novel-in-Progress. His work has appeared in the New York Times, the LA Times, the Oxford American, Garden & Gun, Kenyon Review, and Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America. A New Orleans native, Ruffin is a professor of Creative Writing at Louisiana State University, and the 2020-2021 John and Renee Grisham Writer-in-Residence at the University of Mississippi.

Ardeshir Tabrizi

(Born in 1981, Tehran, Iran; lives and works in Los Angeles, USA)



Ardeshir Tabrizi, *Bavar Kon / Gueume Me*, 2024, Ink, thread, embroidery floss, fabric and gold leaf on canvas

Ardeshir Tabrizi (born in 1981 in Tehran, Iran) lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. Tabrizi's hand-embroidered textile pieces and multilayered narratives use thread and ink to address the intersection of cultural renewal and historical understanding of heritage in contemporary society. He draws from his background to create works that have a global resonance, transcending immediate cultural references and context. His most recent body of work is a personal journey in search of his own nationalistic identity while understanding the role of these physical places in the cultural, geographic, and political landscape of today. Currently, his focus of artistic exploration lies in extended ideas around Diasporic communities, as well as recurring and migratory expressions of cultural identities.

He has exhibited at Roberts Projects in Los Angeles, James Harris Gallery in Seattle, and Galleria Poggiali in Milan, Italy, to name a few. Institutional group exhibitions include Craft Contemporary, Norton Museum, and Rice's Moody Center for the Arts.

Khalif Tahir Thompson

(Born in Brooklyn, USA; lives and works in Queens, USA)



Khalif Tahir Thompson, *Comet*, 2024, Oil, pastel, acrylic, handmade paper, fabric, pleather on canvas, 150 x 210 cm

Khalif Tahir Thompson is best recognized for his powerful work concentrated in portraiture and figuration. Incorporating painting, drawing, collage, printmaking, and paper-making into his practice, he explores notions of self through varied subjectivity concerning identity, race, iconography, as well as family and relationships. Thompson graduated from Purchase College with his Bachelor in Fine arts degree and has since completed a fellowship at the EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop in NYC, the Vermont Studio Center, the Jerome Emerging Artist residency at The Anderson Center and received a 2021 NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellowship in Painting. Thompson will graduate from The Yale School of Art with his MFA in Painting/ Printmaking in May 2024.

Keith Tutt II

(Born in 1981, Riverside, California; lives and works in South California, USA)



Keith Tutt II, [Inward](#), 2023, Sound and electric cello

Keith Tutt, II, is an award-winning producer, professional cellist, songwriter/composer, and master teacher. His musical journey began on the cello at the age of four. By the age of seven, he was studying with world-renowned National Cello Institute founder Richard Mooney. Over the years, Keith's repertoire has expanded to include multiple instruments, programming, and producing. This diverse musical background has enabled Keith to work with a variety of critically acclaimed artists across multiple genres. His string arrangements have been heard on Grammy award-winning albums, and His production has also earned him numerous accolades. Keith Tutt II is an artist whose music blends elements of acoustic and electronic music. His compositions offer a unique experience, as he creates aural landscapes that are both tranquil and engaging.

Paul Verdell

(Born in 1991, Long Beach, USA; lives and works in Detroit, USA)



Paul Verdell, *Sienna Mas; Sunset*, 2022, oil stick on collaged paper, 23 cm x 41 cm

Paul Verdell approaches drawing and painting of portraits, landscapes, and still life through chosen media of oil paints, oil pastels, and crayons, adding playful and textured mark-making to his two-dimensional works. Post-Impressionist and Fauvist influences are communicated through the abandonment of precision in favor of a more fluid form of figurative work, where unnaturally vibrant colors become flesh and limbs, and figures merge with their surroundings. For Verdell, it is the presence of the subject during their sitting that guides the conceptual framework and psychology of each piece. Focusing on the face of the figure rather than the full body, Verdell often chooses to fill the frame with the subject, including only abstracted glimpses of situational detail. A corner of a window, a small blanket thrown over furniture, or any number of natural elements peer out from behind the subject, grounding the figure within a landscape. His tendency toward working quickly to capture emotion results in the works presenting varying exposures of paper between the strokes and fields of color. This lightness is a prominent characteristic of his unique style, inspiring a feeling of ephemerality and fleeting exchange, and allowing the viewer space to explore meaning.

ABOUT BLACK ROCK SENEGAL

Named for the volcanic rocks that blanket its shoreline, Black Rock is a multidisciplinary artist-in-residence program founded by renowned artist Kehinde Wiley in 2019. The residency brings together international artists to live and work in Dakar, Sénégal for 1-3 month stays. The Black Rock compound design was conceived by Senegalese architect Abib Djenne with interior collaboration between Wiley, Fatiya Djenne, and Aissa Dione. Our mission is to support new artistic creation through collaborative exchange and to incite change in the global discourse about Africa.

The residency brings together an annual cohort of 16 international artists to live and work in Dakar, Sénégal for 1-3 months in rotating groups of three. The application is available to all, online, and artists are selected by a jury of leaders in the arts and cultural fields. In 2023, we hosted our 50th artist-in-residence and are thrilled to have welcomed artists from 17 countries to our campus in Senegal. The residency is an invitation for artists to engage with Senegal's artists. During their residency, our team is dedicated to facilitating dynamic programming, engaging with the local artistic community as well as organizing local travel to surrounding areas. We encourage opportunities to host open studios, attend cultural events, visit and learn from local artists, and hold screenings. We work closely with Black Rock artists to identify potential collaborations and suggest events that may be of interest to them throughout their stay.

ABOUT KEHINDE WILEY, PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER

Kehinde Wiley (b. 1977, Los Angeles) is a world-renowned visual artist, best known for his vibrant portrayals of contemporary African-American and African diasporic individuals that subvert the hierarchies and conventions of European and American portraiture. Working in the mediums of painting, sculpture, and video, Wiley's portraits challenge and reorient art-historical narratives, awakening complex sociopolitical issues that many would prefer remain muted. In 2018 Wiley became the first African-American artist to paint an official U.S. Presidential portrait for the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery. Former U.S. President Barack Obama selected Wiley for this honor. Wiley is the recipient of the U.S. Department of State's Medal of Arts, Harvard University's W.E.B. Du Bois Medal, and France's distinction of Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters. He holds a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute, an MFA from Yale University, and honorary doctorates from the Rhode Island School of Design and San Francisco Art Institute. He has held solo exhibitions throughout the United States and internationally and his works are included in the collections of over 60 public institutions around the world. Wiley is the Founder and President of Black Rock Sénégal. He lives and works in Dakar, Lagos, and New York.