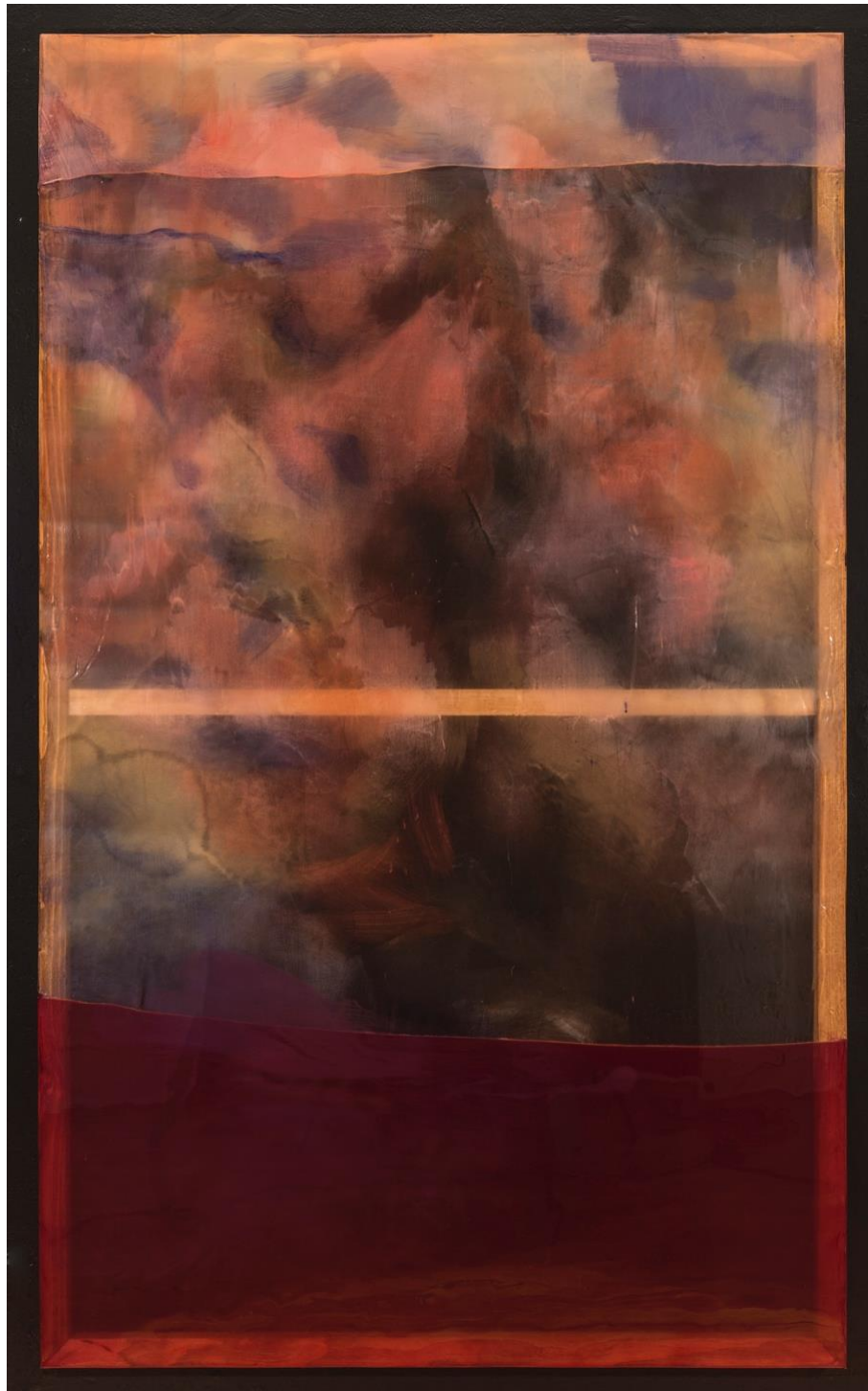


WELANCORA GALLERY presents BEHOLD



Chris Watts, Respect the boundaries (Throne of Elijah), 2021, Tempera, silk, pigment, resin, found wood, black wall, 76 x 46 inches

**ON VIEW**

Saturday, October 2, 2021-January 31, 2022  
Welancora Gallery, 33 Herkimer Street, Brooklyn, New York 11216  
[www.welancoragallery.com](http://www.welancoragallery.com)

**FEATURED ARTISTS**

Oasa DuVerney, Sana Musasama, Komikka Patton, Roberto Visani, Chris Watts

**SOCIALLY DISTANT RECEPTION**

Saturday, October 2, 2021 from 4 :00 pm to 7:00 pm  
By appointment only  
Masks are required

## **ABOUT THE EXHIBITION**

Welancora Gallery is proud to present **BEHOLD**, featuring work by Oasa DuVerney, Sana Musasama, Komikka Patton, Roberto Visani and Chris Watts from October 2, 2021 - January 31, 2022. Through personal and collective memories and lived experiences, the exhibition examines alternative ways to interrogate notions of Blackness through work that is either devoid of the figure or, where the figure is present, the gaze is cued away from the body.

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

Oasa DuVerney signals elements from nature, including waves, snakes and mountains to explore the ways in which Black power and Black bodies exist in contemporary society. Most of DuVerney's work is social and political commentary that relates to her social status as a woman of color and as a working-class person. Her works are mainly figurative drawings, specifically graphite on paper. DuVerney received her B.F.A from the Fashion Institute of Technology, and her M.F.A from Hunter College. She currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Selected exhibitions, residencies and media include: BLACK POWER WAVE, BRIC, Brooklyn, NY (2019); 2019 Women To Watch, NMWA (2019); TV Guide Spring/Break Art Show, United Nations Plaza NYC (2019); Something To Say, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn NY (2018); The Window and the Breaking of the Window, Studio Museum in Harlem, NYC (2016); The Brooklyn Biennial II, BRIC, Brooklyn, NY (2016); Through A Glass Darkly, Postmasters Gallery, NYC (2012); Rush Philanthropic Foundation Artist Residency (2016), Smack Mellon Studio Artist Residency (2014-2015); LMCC Workspace Residency (2012-2013); Brooklyn Foundation Grant (2016); The Guardian UK, UK (2019), The Independent, UK (2016), Hyperallergic (2015, 2016), The Guardian UK,UK (2015), Palestine News Network (2013), and The New York Times (2012, 2011).

**Sana Musasama** is an African-American ceramic and mixed-media artist based in New York City. Her work touches on themes related to tribal adornment practices in various indigenous cultures, and the safety of women. In *We were there, 1993* from her *Maple Trees* series, Musasama draws inspiration from the Maple Tree Movement, which was started in the 1790s by a group of abolitionists. The group advocated ending the need for slave labor to fuel the sugar cane industry on West Indian sugar plantations, by replacing it with syrup from maple trees. Made using various clay bodies that resemble trees with organic and bodily extensions of stone, beads and moss, the work is scaled to the human body ranging in size from 3.5 to over 5 feet.

Musasama was born in Saint Albans, Queens in New York. She holds a B.A. in ceramics and education from City College (1974) and an M.F.A from Alfred State College of Ceramics (1987). She continued her ceramic studies at the Archie Bay Foundation in Helena, Montana; the Gakium Designer College in Tokyo, Japan; the Tuscarora International School of Ceramics in Tuscarora, Nevada; and at Mende Pottery in Mendeland, Sierra Leone. Musasama's work is held in the collections of the Studio Museum in Harlem, Hood Museum of Art, Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum, Mint Museum of Craft and Design, the European Ceramic Center in Hertogenbosch, the Netherlands; the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, Montana, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York. She currently lives and works in New York.

**Komikka Patton** is based in New York City. Her large paper installations and collages touch on futurism, trans humanism, mythology, and storytelling. She creates portals looking into possible futures and collapses space-time into realms in which Black women are gatekeepers to different dimensions, while balancing critical race theory and the ethos of contemporary American culture. Her work explores the ways in which artistic and holistic methods of healing can be used to create positive alternatives for negative stereotypes. Through the use of ballpoint pen, India ink, paper, and assorted printmaking techniques, Patton's work on view is centrally based on the human condition in the African diaspora. In the piece *Mother used to scream and when I heard her, chills came on my skin, 2018*, translates the emotional response associated with being caught between two worlds, Africa and America, into a physical act akin to a child experiencing a temper tantrum.

Patton has been featured in Hyperallergic, and Friend of the Artist Magazine. A solo show at The Ne'-Na Contemporary Art Space in Chiang Mai, Thailand as well as various galleries in NYC and throughout the United States. She is the winner of the Darryl Chappell Foundation Grant, NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellowship Finalist, and the May and Samuel Rudin Foundation Scholarship. She has a B.F.A in Fine Arts from Columbus College of Art & Design and a M.F.A from New York University.

**Roberto Visani** is a multi-media artist residing in Brooklyn, New York. He has exhibited at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, The Studio Museum in Harlem, The Bronx Museum, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, and Barbican Galleries. Visani has been awarded residencies from Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Chelsea College of Art and Abrons Art Center. He is a NYFA Fellow in Sculpture and was a Fulbright Fellow to Ghana. His work has been reviewed by the New York Times, Art Forum, Art News, and Frieze among others. Since 2004 he has taught at John Jay College of Criminal Justice where he is an associate professor of art.

Most recently Visani's work has focused on the representation of the enslaved throughout art history drawing inspiration from the work of Josiah Wedgwood who created the jasperware cameo and Hiram Powers' 1843 sculpture *The Greek Slave*. Visani's research in this area has given birth to his series *cardboard slave kit: abolitionist blend*, 2020 and *cardboard slave kit: h powers blend* (2021), created in a beveled cardboard technique that utilizes 3-D modeling software that gives life to the figure and raises all sorts of questions about the use of technology and how we view the enslaved Black body today on these terms. In *A New Tomorrow*, 2021, Visani continues to utilize technology, in his laser cut drawings mounted in antique oval frames, to reimagine problematic slave portraiture by giving agency to his subjects.

**Chris Watts** is an abstract painter and mixed-media artist whose work seeks to revise, interrogate, and re-examine social and personal narratives through the transfiguration of painting, drawing, video, and installations. This re-examination also seeks to create a project of disruption. Currently, these projects exist as representations of windows as switches into another, layered, assemblage of spaces where the distinction between what is real and what is represented is thoroughly confused.

Studying and archiving public surveillance, police body cams, and pedestrian iphone footage led to the creation of his "The Blahk on Blahk on Blak" series. The transparent paintings were made for, and to be displayed only on black walls. This intent is to create another dimension to these already layered constructs and to create realities that only reveal themselves in blackness. Two of the four works created for **BEHOLD**, *Respect the boundaries (Throne of Elijah)* and *I am speaking (Kingdom of Elijah)* memorialize 23-year-old Elijah McClain who was unarmed when he was murdered at the hands of Aurora Colorado Police and first responders. These works endeavour to privilege the figure and reexamine our relationship to surface. The work alters how we think about the effects and materiality of racialized skin on display.

Chris Watts was born in High Point, North Carolina. He attended the MFA program at Yale School of Art, New Haven, CT, after graduating from the College of Arts and Architecture, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, NC, and the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, Wroclaw, PL. Watts has held various artist residencies, among them the Marek Maria Pienkowski Foundation, Chelm, PL; McColl Center for Art + Innovation, Charlotte, NC; the Art & Law Fellowship Program, at Cornell University Art Architecture Planning, New York, NY; and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Workspace Program, New York, NY. His work has been exhibited nationally and internationally. He is a featured artist in the documentary film, *The Art of Making It*, directed by Kelcey Edwards, and from the Emmy-nominated producer Debi Wisch (*The Price of Everything*). The film will have its world premiere at the 2021 Hamptons International Film Festival. Watts shares his time between New York and North Carolina.

For inquiries regarding any of the artists in the exhibition, please contact [sales@welancoragallery.com](mailto:sales@welancoragallery.com).

For press inquiries, please contact [pr@welancoragallery.com](mailto:pr@welancoragallery.com).