

Press Release  
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*Into the Shining Dark*  
Opening reception: Thursday, April 24, 2025  
6:00pm-8:00pm



Oasa DuVerney, *BLACK POWER WAVE as Virgin of Guadalupe* (2025)

Welancora Gallery is proud to present *Into the Shining Dark*, a solo exhibition of new and recent works on paper by Oasa DuVerney. The exhibition opens on Thursday, April 24 with a reception from 6:00pm to 8:00pm and will remain on view until June 19, 2025. This marks DuVerney's second solo exhibition at the gallery.

Motivated by DuVerney's interest in recalling events, people, and movements that she believes are essential to progressing solidarity for the liberation of Black and all oppressed peoples, *Into the Shining Dark* sheds light on these concerns through the portraits of several Black women who have been marginalized because of their social and political rebellion. BLACK POWER WAVE protective symbols such as the Fu Dog, Virgin of Guadalupe, the Sudhana (the young traveler seeking knowledge from the bodhisattvas), emerge through hand cut paper to represent

a more nuanced representation of the melding of cultures and communities that drives much of DuVerney's work and life.

The title of the exhibition takes its name from Lucille Clifton's 1975 poem *the thirty-eighth year*. As in Clifton's poem, DuVerney's works undergo a reflection upon Black womanhood, ancestry, and self actualization. Her portraits of women and young girls who overcame injustice – initially treated as criminals and only later vindicated – are a meditation on maternal lineage, community, survival, resistance, and rebellion. Figures such as Joan Little, Claudia Jones, Fannie Lou Hamer, Olive Morris, and Carrie Minor Johnson are rendered in graphite. Depicted in menacing courtrooms or paired with vengeful words on the front pages of newspapers, DuVerney's figuration foregrounds the resilience and power of these women in the face of opposition.

DuVerney's own personal history is implicated within the broader narrative. Through her own research she learned of her ancestor Louisa Calderon, a "free" 13 year old girl in Trinidad whose torture was ordered by Governor Thomas Picton in 1801. The successful prosecution of Governor Picton for her torture would later play a defining role in the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies. Having recognized that the struggle of Louisa Calderon echoes the horrors that countless other Black and Brown women have been subjected to throughout history, DuVerney's work is an invitation to reflect and recall the history of the Americas. Rather than looking away or avoiding this history just to survive, the exhibition presents a turning towards the darkness that Clifton speaks of: the shining dark.

Excerpt from Lucille Clifton's *the thirty-eighth year*, 1975:

*into the shining dark  
let me come to it whole  
and holy  
not afraid  
not lonely  
out of my mothers life  
into my own  
into my own*

### **About the Artist**

**Oasa DuVerney's** (b. 1979 Queens, NY) work reimagines elements from both the natural and urban, political and social landscapes as active sites in building solidarity for Black liberation; In a world where some people and places have been deemed not worthy of protection, the figures in her works are rendered with the care, compassion and understanding that they deserve but aren't always afforded.

DuVerney received a B.F.A. from SUNY, Fashion Institute of Technology, and an M.F.A. from CUNY, Hunter College. She is currently an Assistant Professor for the School of Art and School of Design at Pratt Institute. Selected exhibitions include *Flight Into Egypt*, The Metropolitan

Museum of Art, New York, NY (2024); *Acquired! Shaping the National Design Collection*, Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, NY, NY (2024), *A World To Live In*, Welancora Gallery, Brooklyn, NY (2022); Brooklyn Hi-Art Machine: *Paradise Is One's Own Place*, Weeksville Heritage Center, Brooklyn, NY (2021); *Jon Gray of Ghetto Gastro Selects*, Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum, NY, NY (2021); *2020 Women To Watch*, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC (2020); *Twenty Twenty*, Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT (2020); *BLACK POWER WAVE*, BRIC, Brooklyn, NY (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); DuVerney has completed residencies at BRIC, Rush Arts, and Smack Mellon, among others. Her work is in the collection of the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum and The Metropolitan Museum of Art.