

THE BISHOP GALLERY

The Bishop to exhibit highly anticipated solo debut of Jabari Jefferson curated by Thomas James

Opening reception: Saturday October 14th, 6-9pm

630 Flushing Ave, Brooklyn, NY

info@thebishopgallery.com



Devotion

Brooklyn, NY, September 8th, 2023 - The Bishop Gallery is pleased to present “Devotion” the debut solo exhibition of Jabari Jefferson. The exhibition features 9 works meticulously created during Jefferson’s year-long residency at The Bishop Gallery’s artist residency program. Jefferson’s mixed media practice amalgamates collage-making and portrait painting, pushing the limits of each genre. His sourced materials include pre-owned, repurposed objects such as fabric, paper, and foil as well as books from his family’s library. Through the imagery he creates, Jefferson aims to encourage self-exploration and covertly raise the consciousness within African-American society.

Drawing inspiration from art movements such as Surrealism, Pop Art, and Afrofuturism, Jefferson’s artworks on display elevate the existence of esoteric Black subjects. By using recognizable elements of Black life such as the remnants of African-American fashion items and the physical inclusion of Black-conscious books, Jefferson is able to depict lived experiences in a manner easily recognizable to members of his particular community. As well, scenes of community building can be recognized through depictions of social interactions and rituals between intergenerational community members.

Thematically, the works in Devotion entangle religious iconography with the depiction of things

Jefferson has found personally inspiring to his art making journey. Together, images of anime characters and hip-hop album covers along with Renaissance art references are used by Jefferson

to catapult himself into the lexicon of influential African-American artists that have come before him. Upon examination, Devotion delivers philosophical questions around what it looks like to dedicate yourself to a singular intention, and challenges what those outcomes may manifest into.

Jefferson’s debut solo exhibition is guided by the curation of Thomas James, which also marks

James’ debut curation in New York City. James critically steers Jefferson in the direction of ‘less is

more’. Leading Jefferson to conscientiously create only 10 works for the exhibition.

About Jabari Jefferson

Jabari C Jefferson (b. 1994, Washington, DC) is a mixed media oil painter based in Washington DC. His multimedia paintings are layered with found mixed media material such as books, fabric, paper, ink, acrylic and oil paints. His process involves searching local Black communities for once owned items and repurposing them into usable pieces that add to his overall palette of materials. Inspired by ritualistic practices, Jefferson believes in the transfer of energy in the materials from their previous owners. The subject of the work is self-education, self-development, and learning self-identity. The goal of his creative practice is to communicate and embody what the process of learning looks like. Jefferson received his BFA in painting from School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2016. He has participated in group shows at galleries such as Kravets Wehby Gallery (New York), Ross & Kramer Gallery (New York), Swivel Gallery (New York), 1969 Gallery (New York), and Band of Vices Gallery (Los Angeles). His art has been featured in art fairs including Prizm Art Fair (Miami, FL) and Barely Art Fair (Los Angeles). He has participated in artist-in-residence programs at International Center for the Arts (Monte Castello, Italy), Four Seasons Hotel (Washington, DC), and Studio House (Baltimore, MD). His art resides in the collections of Mount Holyoke College Art Museum (South Hadley, MA) and Thomas Jefferson Monticello Museum (Charlottesville, VA).

About Thomas James

Thomas F. James (b. Washington, DC, 1994) is a curator based in Baltimore, MD. The focal aspect of his work is to communicate ideas through exhibitions focusing on storytelling. By approaching his curatorial practice as a narrator, he is able to emphasize the cultural backgrounds and nuances within artists' works. This is done in the hopes to provide viewers with more context and a holistic scope of what artists are presenting. He finds storytelling imperative to communicating grander concepts that create approachable, intellectual conversations. James was the Director of Visual Arts at Creative Alliance (Baltimore, MD) from 2018-2021, served as Curator & Head of Exhibitions Committee at Eubie Blake Cultural Center (Baltimore, MD) from 2019-2022, and is now the Executive Director of The Last Resort Artist Retreat (Baltimore, MD). He has guest curated numerous exhibitions at institutions including The Phillips Collection (Washington, DC), Museum of Contemporary Art Arlington (Arlington, VA), Maryland Institute College of Art (Baltimore, MD), and Band of Vices Gallery (Los Angeles, CA)