

BLACK IS A COLOR  
CURATED BY ESSENCE HARDEN



**CJG** CHARLIE JAMES GALLERY  
CHINATOWN, LOS ANGELES

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# BLACK IS A COLOR

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Charlie James Gallery is pleased to present *black is a color*, a group exhibition curated by Essence Harden, with works by Sadie Barnette, Adee Roberson, Lauren Halsey, Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle, Texas Isaiah, Azikiwe Mohammed, Nikki Pressley, and Patrick Martinez.

What would it be to see pink on the wall and name it black?

“black is a color” asks how color has been employed as a central musing on black subjectivity. The exhibition considers how color—as spectra, chroma, saturation, and vessel—is a utility of/on blackness. In thinking through the process of hyperpigments, in particular, the show centers luster and vibrancy as speculative sites on kin, cosmology, resistance, and place. Here, black optics and corporeality are equally entangled with pleasure and play as with the durability and gravity implied by black. Through each artist’s lens, color comes to (en)compass visions of black life, futures, and presence. In a gesture towards abstraction in which blackness is and is not locatable, then, “black is a color” is an epistemological exploration of black diasporic wonderings.

### About the Curator:

Essence Harden (Oakland, CA) works at the intersections of blackness, art, and cultural history.

Essence is a Ph.D. candidate, independent curator, writer, and artist. Her visual work has appeared at Good Children Gallery, Black Portraitures III, SOMarts, and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA). Her writing has appeared in Performa Magazine, SFAQ: International Arts and Culture, Everyday Feminism, Palmss Magazine, and Acres. She currently resides in Los Angeles, CA.

Essence earned her B.A in History from UC Berkeley and her M.A in African American Studies from UC Berkeley, and is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in African Diaspora Studies at UC Berkeley. Her dissertation queries post Black Power constructions of black masculinity, queerness, and fashion.

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BLACK IS A COLOR  
ADEE ROBERSON



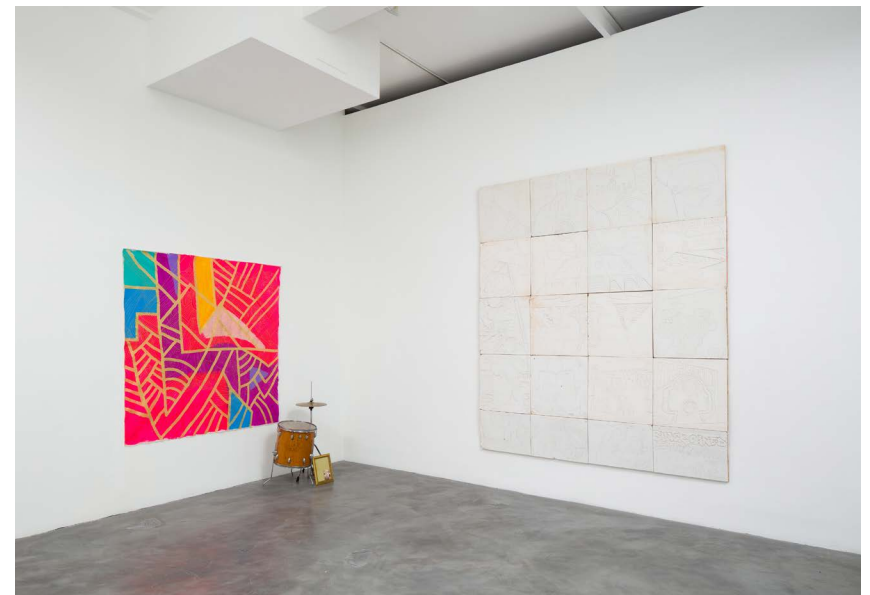
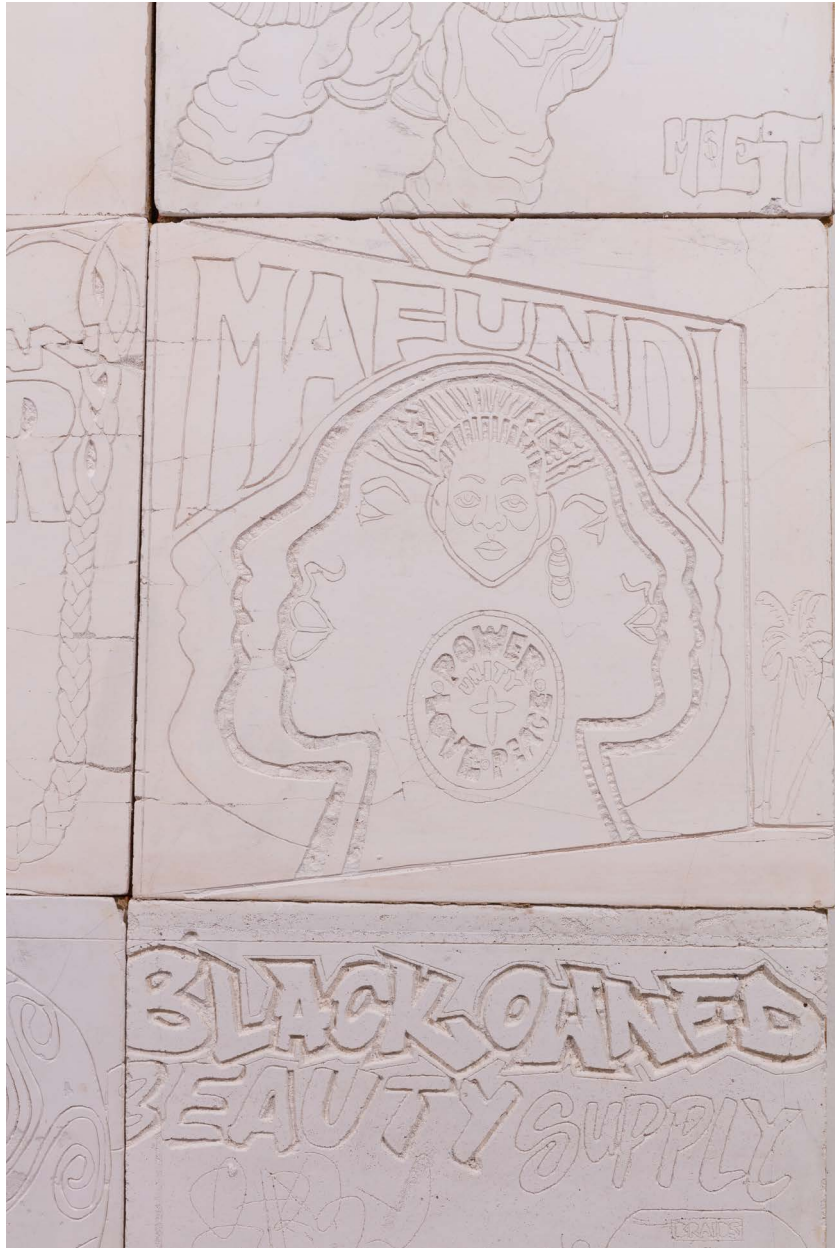
*Got to Keep Hanging On*  
Acrylic on canvas  
72 x 72 inches  
2017

BLACK IS A COLOR  
LAUREN HALSEY



*The Crenshaw District  
Hieroglyph Project:  
Tower 1: 20 of 1356  
20 Gypsum panels  
96 x 112.5 inches  
2017*

BLACK IS A COLOR  
LAUREN HALSEY



BLACK IS A COLOR  
KENYATTA A.C. HINKLE



*Kentifrican Headdress*  
Chicken wire, synthetic  
fiber  
2009/2012



BLACK IS A COLOR  
KENYATTA A.C. HINKLE



*The Evanesced: Hoaxes, Hoaxes and Haints #4*  
India ink on Duralar  
24 in x 40 inches  
Unframed  
2017



*The Evanesced: Hoaxes, Hoaxes and Haints #5*  
India ink on Duralar  
24 in x 40 inches  
Unframed  
2017

BLACK IS A COLOR  
NIKKI PRESSLEY



*weight of the invisible*  
*(DuBois homesite)*  
60 x 48 inches  
Framed  
2015-2017

BLACK IS A COLOR  
NIKKI PRESSLEY



*activation through removal*  
27 x 62 inches  
Framed  
2015-2017

BLACK IS A COLOR  
TEXAS ISAIAH



*My Name is My Name I*  
Archival Pigment Print  
20 x 30 inches  
Framed  
Edition of 5

BLACK IS A COLOR  
TEXAS ISIAIAH



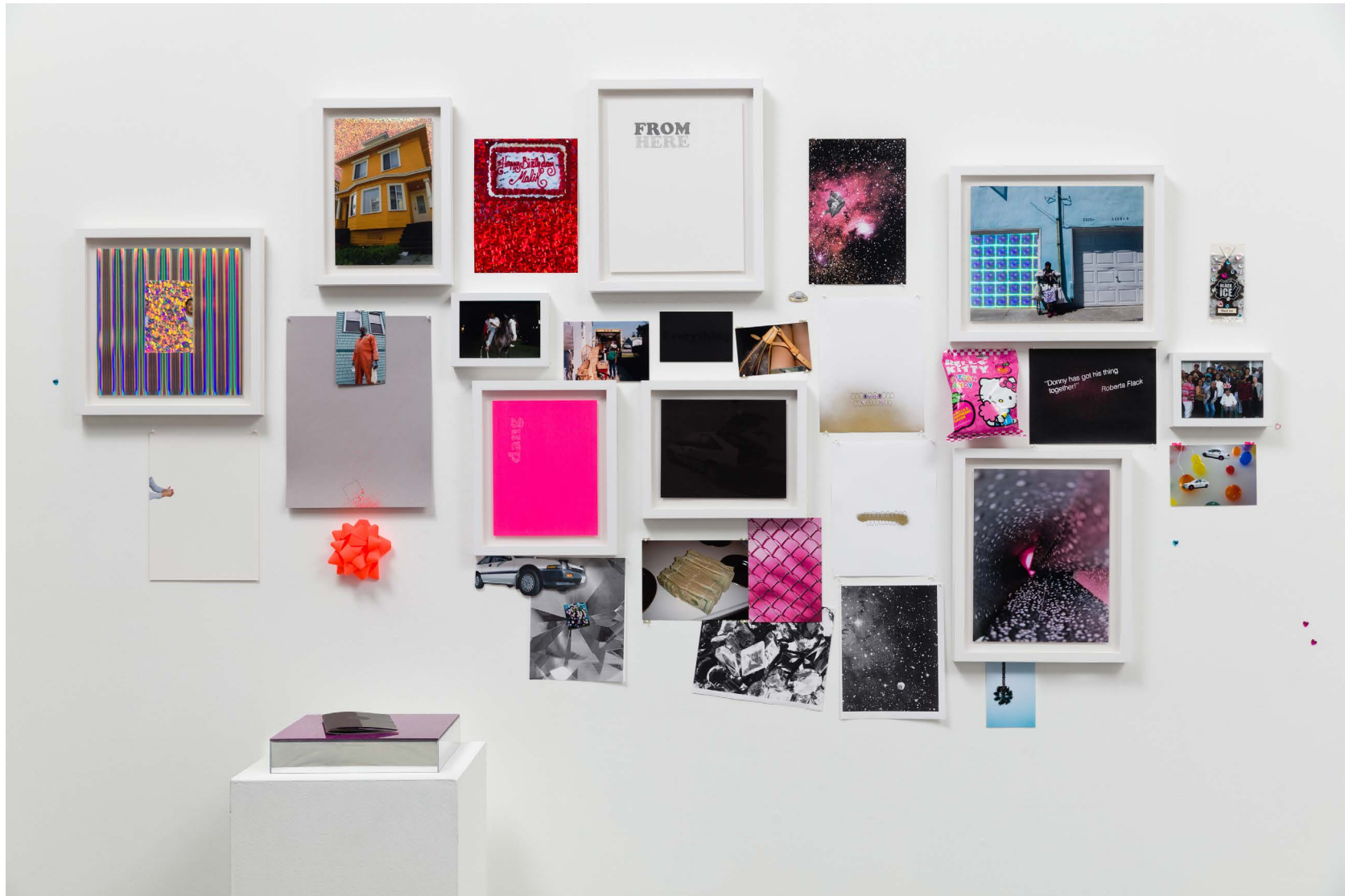
*My Name is My Name II*  
Glass, paper, flowers,  
fabric, plastic, various  
objects/materials  
Dimensions variable

BLACK IS A COLOR  
PATRICK MARTINEZ



*Black Owned*  
Neon  
20.5 x 26 inches  
2016  
Edition of 3

BLACK IS A COLOR  
SADIE BARNETTE



BLACK IS A COLOR  
SADIE BARNETTE



*Untitled (Split Face 2)*  
Collage on holographic papers  
15.25 x 15.5 inches  
Framed  
2016



*Untitled (Glitter House)*  
Collage  
15 x 11.5 inches  
Framed  
2017



BLACK IS A COLOR  
SADIE BARNETTE

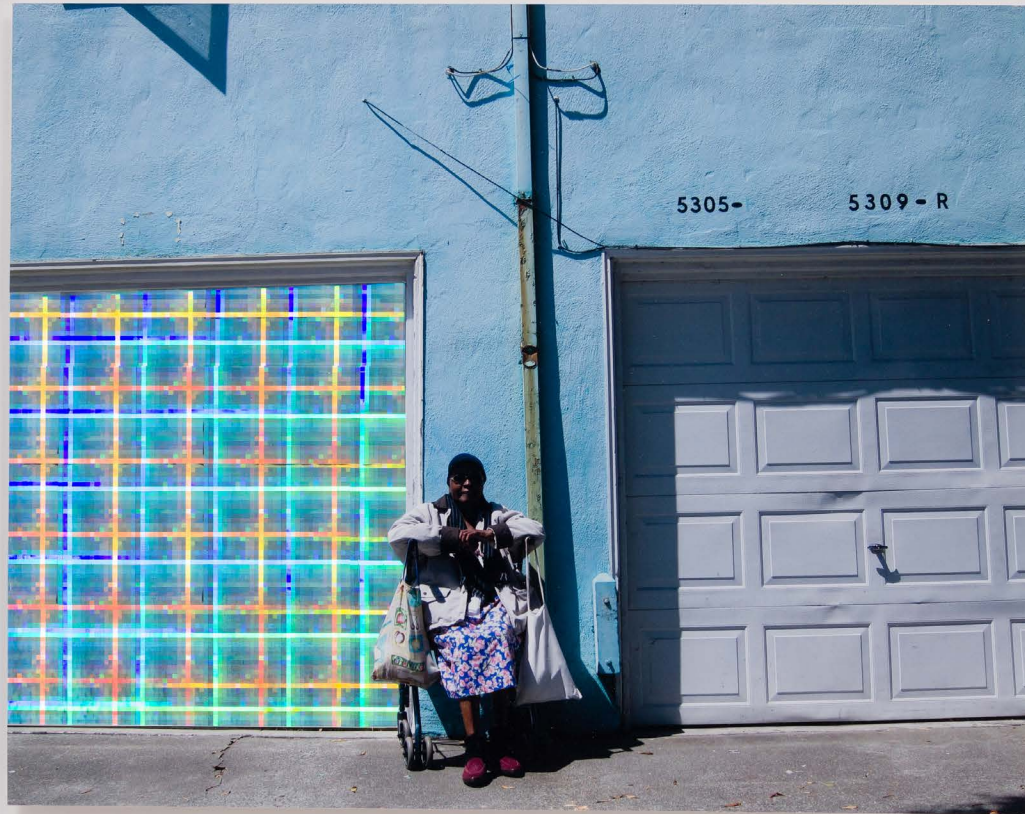


*Untitled (From Here)*  
Graphite on paper  
17 x 14.25 inches  
Framed  
2017



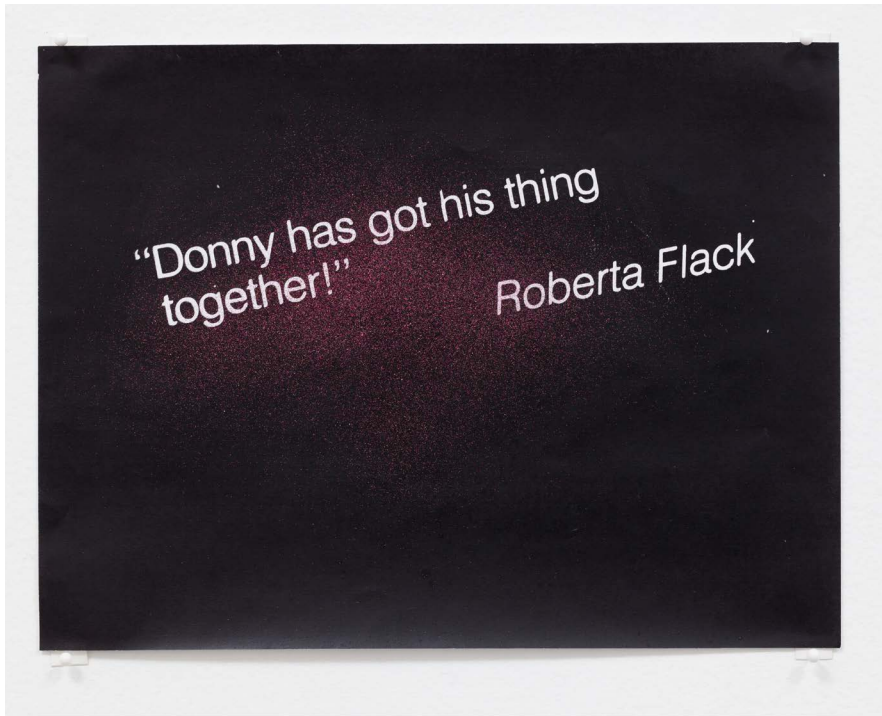
*Untitled (Dang)*  
Glitter on paper  
14 x 12 inches  
Framed  
2017

BLACK IS A COLOR  
SADIE BARNETTE



*Untitled*  
*(Oakland Lady)*  
Collage  
14.25 x 17.25 inches  
Framed  
2017

BLACK IS A COLOR  
SADIE BARNETTE



*Untitled (Donny Hathaway)*  
Glitter on xerox  
8 x 10 inches  
Unframed  
2017



*Untitled (Hatchback on black)*  
Xerox  
13.5 x 11 inches  
Framed  
2017

BLACK IS A COLOR  
SADIE BARNETTE



*Untitled (Pink and Black  
Abstract)*  
C-print  
17.25 x 14.25 inches  
Framed  
2017

BLACK IS A COLOR  
SADIE BARNETTE



*Untitled (Orange Jumpsuit)*  
Photograph, spray paint,  
graphite, bow  
22 x 12 inches  
Unframed  
2017

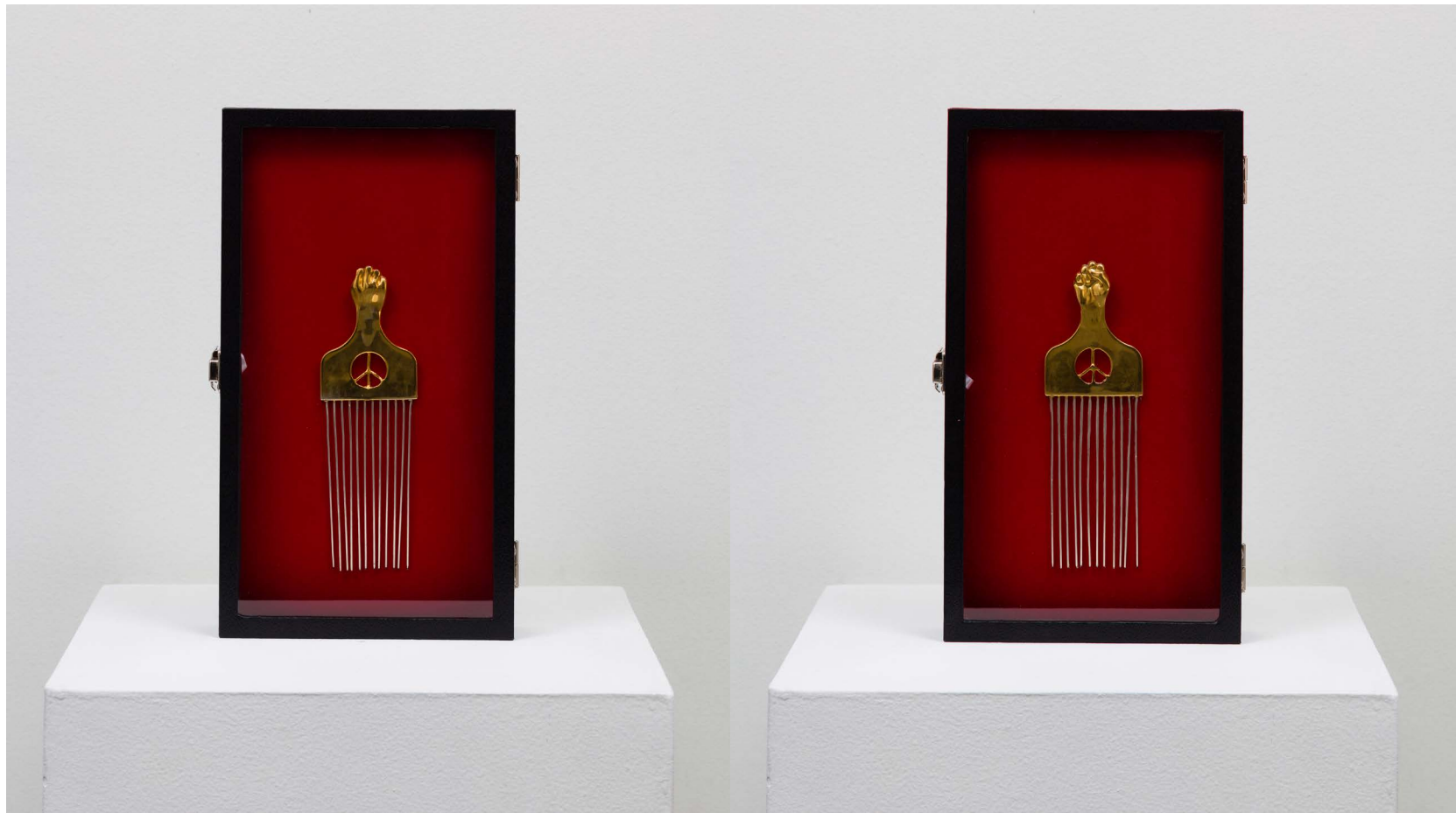
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BLACK IS A COLOR  
AZIKIWE MOHAMMED



*Black Receipt #5*  
Sterling Silver and Gold  
Plating  
8 x 15 x 2.5 inches  
2017



BLACK IS A COLOR  
AZIKIWE MOHAMMED



*1st Date / Thank You,  
Now I'm Tired*  
Tapestry  
65 x 76 inches  
2017

BLACK IS A COLOR  
AZIKIWE MOHAMMED



*Two Ladies Taking A  
Beach Break*  
Tapestry  
65 x 76 inches  
2017

BLACK IS A COLOR  
AZIKIWE MOHAMMED



*Panther 1*  
Lamp  
17 x 14 x 7 inches  
2017



*Panther 2*  
Lamp  
16.5 x 14 x 7 inches  
2017

BLACK IS A COLOR  
AZIKIWE MOHAMMED



*Mary*  
Lamp  
10 x 9 x 6 inches  
2016



*Anita*  
Lamp  
15 x 13 x 6 inches  
2017

BLACK IS A COLOR  
AZIKIWE MOHAMMED



*Lamont*  
Lamp  
21 x 5.5 x 5.5 inches  
2017



*Isabel Flower*  
Lamp  
12 x 6 x 6 inches  
2016

BLACK IS A COLOR  
AZIKIWE MOHAMMED



*Jesus*  
Ceramic figurine  
10.5 x 4.5 x 4 inches  
2017



*Neighborhood Grocer*  
Lamp  
10 x 9 x 6 inches  
2016

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AZIKIWE MOHAMMED



*Alene*  
Ceramic figurine  
8 x 3 x 3 inches  
2017



*Josephine*  
Ceramic figurine in wicker basket  
9 x 9.5 x 9 inches  
2017

BLACK IS A COLOR  
AZIKIWE MOHAMMED



*Cherub*  
Vase, mirrored rotating display  
10 x 9 x 6 inches  
2017



*Dr Jill*  
Ceramic figurine  
7.5 x 7 x 5 inches  
2017



BLACK IS A COLOR  
AZIKIWE MOHAMMED



*Drummer Boy*  
Lamp  
12 x 6 x 6 inches  
2015

BLACK IS A COLOR  
AZIKIWE MOHAMMED



*Aiyana Jones*  
Airbrushed t- shirt and  
14k gold name ring  
31 x 25 inches  
2017

*Gabriella Nevarez*  
Airbrushed t- shirt and  
14k gold name ring  
31 x 25 inches  
2017

*Tanisha Anderson*  
Airbrushed t- shirt and  
14k gold name ring  
31 x 25 inches  
2017

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## ARTIST BIOS

**Sadie Barnette** is from Oakland, CA. She earned her BFA from CalArts and her MFA from the University of California, San Diego. Her work has been exhibited throughout the United States and internationally at venues including The Studio Museum in Harlem (where she was Artist in Residence 2014-15), the California African American Museum, the Oakland Museum of California, The Mistake Room, and Goodman Gallery in Johannesburg, South Africa. Barnette has been featured in The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, The Guardian UK, Artforum, Vogue, and Forbes, among other publications. Her work is in the permanent collections of museums such as The Pérez Art Museum in Miami, the California African American Museum, and The Studio Museum in Harlem. Barnette is represented by Charlie James Gallery in Los Angeles and lives and works in Oakland, CA and Compton, CA

**Adee Roberson** was born in West Palm Beach, Florida in 1981, with strong familial ties to Jamaica. Her work weaves rich celestial landscapes with drum patterns, found photos, synthesizers and various percussion instruments. She has exhibited and performed her work in numerous galleries and independent venues including, Portland Institute of Contemporary Art, SomArts Cultural Center, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, African American Cultural Center, and Art Gallery of Windsor, Ontario. She is based Los Angeles, and Oakland, CA where she co-founded Black Salt Collective.

**Lauren Halsey** was born in Los Angeles, California in 1987. She holds an MFA from Yale University (2014) and a BFA from California Institute of the Arts (2012). Lauren recently completed residencies at Recess (2016), at The Studio Museum in Harlem (2014-2015) and is the recipient of the Los Angeles Design Festival Edge Award (2017) and Rema Hort Mann Foundation Emerging Artist Award (2014). She builds fantasy sculptures and environments that remix ephemera she gathers with hyperreal nature, technicolors, outerspace and Funk. The works exist as spatial metaphors for liberation, self-definition and love.

**Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle** is an interdisciplinary visual artist, writer and performer. Her practice fluctuates between collaborations and participatory projects with alternative gallery spaces within various communities to projects that are intimate and based upon her private experiences in relationship to historical events and contexts. A term that has become a mantra for her practice is the “Historical Present,” as she examines the residue of history and how it affects our contemporary world perspective. Her artwork and experimental writing has been exhibited and performed at The Studio Museum in Harlem, Project Row Houses, The Hammer Museum, The Museum of Art at The University of New Hampshire, The Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) in San Francisco and The Made in LA 2012 Biennial. Hinkle’s work has been reviewed by the Los Angeles Times, LA Weekly, Artforum, Hyperallergic, The Huffington Post, The Washington Post and The New York Times. She is also the recipient of several awards including: The Cultural Center for Innovation’s Investing in Artists Grant, Social Practice in Art (SPart-LA), Jacob K Javits Fellowship for Graduate Study, The Fulbright Student Fellowship, and The Rema Hort Mann Foundation’s Emerging Artists Award. Her writing has appeared in Not That But This, Obsidian Journal, Among Margins: Critical & Lyrical Writing on Aesthetics, and she has a forthcoming first book called SIR, a reflection on naming as a tool for undefining the defined, that will be published with Litmus Press. Hinkle has a current solo show called The Evanescence at The California African American Museum in Los Angeles on view until June 25, 2017.

**Texas Isaiah** is a visual narrator from Brooklyn, NY. His work documents gender, race, and sexuality through topophilia, a strong sense of place that is connected to people’s lived poetics. By honoring the intimate relationships that individuals compose with places through experience and ancestral recognition, a space of questioning photography, both as a discipline and as a tool, is accessed. By inviting the sitter to participate in the process of creating a photograph, the attention and care becomes more operative as the light and shadow functions as a cloak for Black and POC bodies who have experienced trauma and erasure within photography.

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## ARTIST BIOS

Texas Isaiah's work has been exhibited in various spaces such as Studio Museum in Harlem, Slought Foundation, Newspace Center for Photography, NYU Kimmel Galleries, and Dixon Place. He was named "12 African American Photographers You Should Follow Right Now" by TIME Magazine. Texas Isaiah has been featured in FADER, Spook Mag, Juxtapoz Magazine, Aperture, VSCO, Papersafe Magazine, FLATT Magazine, Original Plumbing, Elixher Magazine, The Photographic Journal, and various other publications. He is currently working on his first visual song book, Capricorn Moon, which addresses topophilia and gender through song lyrics and photographs of individuals in Los Angeles, Oakland, San Francisco, New Orleans, and Brooklyn. Texas Isaiah currently resides in Los Angeles, but travels throughout San Francisco, Oakland, and Brooklyn.

**Azikiwe Mohammed** graduated from Bard College in 2005 where he studied photography and fine arts. Since then he has shown these things in galleries both nationally and internationally. In 2015 he received the Art Matters Grant, and in 2016 was the recipient of the Rema Hort Mann Emerging Artist Grant. He lives in New York and is currently in residence at Mana Fine Arts as part of their mana BSMT program

**Nikki Pressley** is an artist, designer and educator whose work is concerned with examining and conjuring the narratives associated with personal and collective history, language, belief and memory. She is interested in interpretations of time and space that are malleable and destabilizing in relation to humanity and self. Her work consists of various media, including graphic, ink, wood, cement and organic materials that function as contemplations on various ideas, often creating broad relationships from project to project. Nikki is inspired by how we locate physical, psychological and spiritual existences within parameters of time and place where transformations, rather than totalizing cycles, are the concern. In this line of questioning, her interests and goals lie in opening a narrative that re-captures and re-conceives individual and collective existence.

Nikki was born in Greenville, South Carolina. She received her BA from Furman University and her MFA California Institute of the Arts in Studio Art. Pressley has had solo exhibitions at Furman University, Charlies James Gallery, Darrow School and Las Cienegas Projects. Nikki was included in the emerging artist exhibition at the Studio Museum in Harlem entitled Fore, and was included in the 2010 California Biennial. She was also featured in the Project Series at Pomona College Museum of Art. She has participated in group exhibitions at the New Museum in New York, California African American Museum, UC Irvine, Charlie James Gallery, Torrance Art Museum, Coma Art Space in Los Angeles and others. She is also a design and educator and currently lives and works in Los Angeles.

Born and raised in the San Gabriel Valley, **Patrick Martinez's** L.A. suburban upbringing and his diverse cultural background (Filipino, Mexican and Native American), provided him with a unique lens through which he interprets his surroundings. Influenced by the Hip Hop movement, Martinez cultivated his art practice through graffiti, which later led him to the Art Center College of Design, where he earned a BFA with honors in 2005. Through his facility with a wide variety of media (painting, neon, ceramic and sculpture), Martinez colorfully scrutinizes otherwise everyday realities of suburban and urban life in L.A. with humor, sensitivity and wit.

Patrick Martinez, (b. 1980 Pasadena, CA) earned his BFA with honors from Art Center College of Design in 2005. His work has been exhibited domestically and internationally in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Minneapolis, Miami, New York and the Netherlands, and he has shown in venues including the Vincent Price Art Museum, Biola University, LA Louver, Showroom MAMA, Providence College Galleries, MACLA, SUR biennial, Chinese American Museum and Euphrat Museum of Art. He has been covered by the Los Angeles Times, KPCC, KCRW, Fusion, Art News, Opening Ceremony Art Blog and Wired. He has work in the collections of the Cornell Fine Art Museum, Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, and the Museum of Latin American Art. Martinez has his first solo museum show at the Cornell Fine Arts Museum from May 25 to September 10, 2017. Patrick lives and works in Los Angeles.