

# THIS IS NOT A RETREAT!

NXTHVN Through the Years

JUNE 5–AUGUST 2, 2025

Curated by Marissa Del Toro

Ford  
Foundation  
Gallery

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June 5 – August 2, 2025

Exhibiting artists: Felipe Baeza, Layo Bright, Allana Clarke, Alexandria Couch, Kenturah Davis, Anindita Dutta, Daniel Tyree Gaitor-Lomack, Merik Goma, John Guzman, Eric Hart Jr., Fidelis Joseph, Alyssa Klauer, Africanus Okokon, Esteban Ramón Pérez, Jamaal Peterman, Alexander Puz, Patrick Quarm, Athena Quispe, Daniel Ramos, Ilana Savdie, Alisa Sikelianos-Carter, Vaughn Spann, Capt. James Stovall V, Warith Taha, and Vincent Valdez.

Curated by Marissa Del Toro



NXTHVN • 169 Henry St. New Haven, CT

Since 2018, NXTHVN has catalyzed the careers of 41 artists and 12 curators through a 10-month intensive Fellowship Program of mentorship, professional development, and hands-on training. Co-founded by Titus Kaphar and Jason Price, NXTHVN is a space where creatives expand their skills, network, and confidence. This presentation of artworks created by NXTHVN alumni artists is a reminder of the strength and power of network, camaraderie, and support founded through art education and residencies. At a time when initiatives and support for the arts are being eliminated, NXTHVN stands firm in supporting the work of talented artists and curators from around the world.

*THIS IS NOT A RETREAT!* underscores the work and history of NXTHVN as an arts model that empowers artists and curators through education and access to a vibrant ecosystem. Each year at the beginning of the fellowship program, Kaphar advises the newly admitted fellows that their time at NXTHVN will be quick but special with a reminder that “this [experience] is not a retreat.” Instead, it is a space where artists and curators learn to fortify themselves with entrepreneurial knowledge, deeper creative purpose, inspiration, and greater community. This exhibition honors the individuals who have contributed, experienced, supported, and made NXTHVN into a prominent institution where access, knowledge, independence, excellence, artistic liberation, and innovation flourish.



**Vaughn Spann**

(Florida, USA, b. 1992, lives and works in New Haven, CT)

*By your side (big black rainbow),*  
2020

Polymer paint, Flashe, terry cloth,  
canvas on stretcher bars

84 × 80 inches

Courtesy of Bennet H. Grutman



The great American memoirist, poet, and civil rights activist Maya Angelou once said, “Be a rainbow in someone else’s cloud,” an encouragement of compassion, kindness, and hope, especially in dark times. Vaughn Spann’s *By your side (big black rainbow)* was created in 2020 during a fraught and intense time of despair. Painted on terry cloth in homage to his grandmother, this work is also part of his rainbow series, in tribute to Trayvon Martin, an unarmed teenager who was shot and killed in 2012, as a mournful memorial to the tragic loss of a young Black life. Spann’s rainbow is a reference to the bag and advertisement for Skittles, the candy Martin was eating when he died, but with the unique insertion of a black arch at the top as a metaphorical reference to Blackness and its complexities within the United States. In many ways the work contains a multitude of interpretations, encompassing grief, joy, despair, and hope. For some, the rainbow also brings to mind the biblical story of Noah and the rainbow, which is prominently invoked in the old African American spiritual song *Mary Don’t You Weep*. The author and civil rights activist James Baldwin partly references this biblical and spiritual touchstone in the title of his 1963 book *The Fire Next Time*, in which he called for change and social justice within the U.S. As Baldwin wrote in his 1962 *New York Times* article *AS MUCH TRUTH AS ONE CAN BEAR*, “Not everything that is faced can be changed; but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

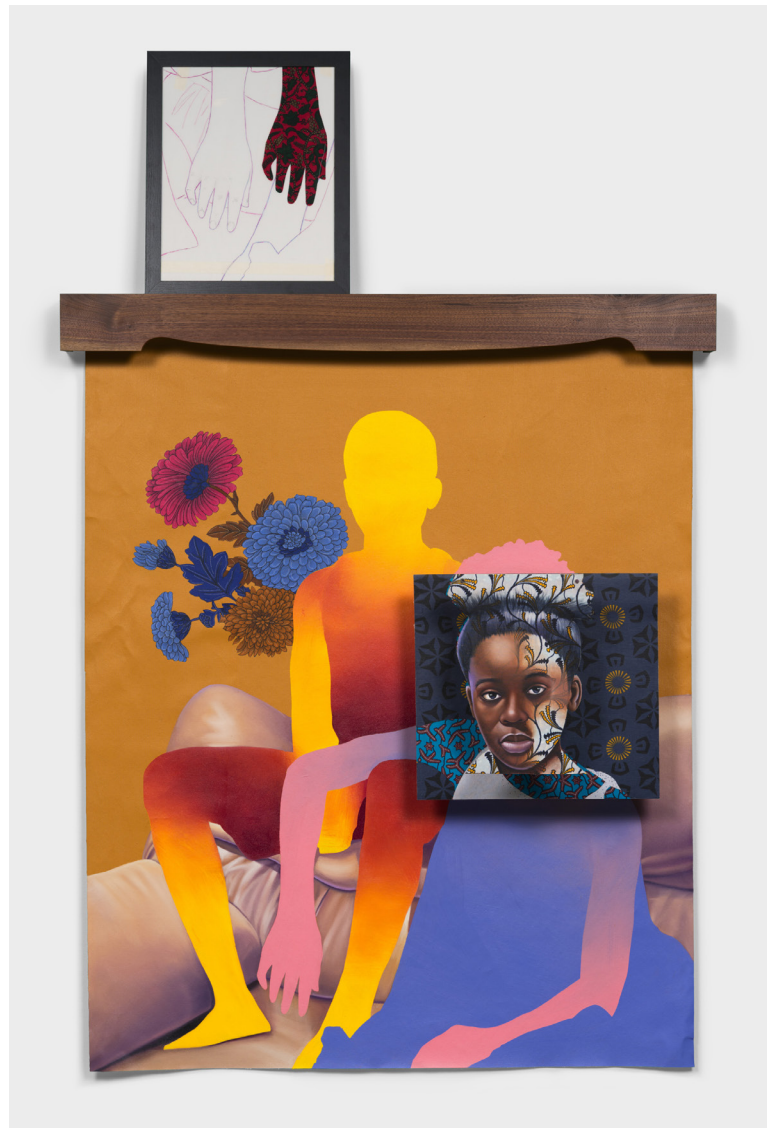


**Patrick Quarm**

(Ghana, b. 1988, lives and works in Accra, Ghana)

*So We Dey*, 2024

Mixed media: acrylic and oil on African print fabric, wooden cornice  
75 × 58 × 30 inches, 3 layers  
Courtesy of the Artist



Through vibrantly hued, layered paintings, Patrick Quarm explores the complexity of humanity and the hybridity of identity. Quarm overlays and mixes materials such as African printed fabrics with his distinct style of figurative portraiture. His figures are frequently depicted through a chameleon-like styling, whereby their bodies and skin reveal fabric patterns layered beneath them or are completely obscured as colorful gradient shadows. In his recent work *So We Dey*, created during his 2024 residency at Artpace in San Antonio, Texas, he combines a wooden cornice that serves as a mantel to his three-layered painting with a framed fabric panel of outstretched hands that sits atop it. The title of this work pulls from the Ghanaian Pidgin English term “dey” that signifies “to be” or “to exist.” The main figures in this painting are Quarm’s niece and nephew, whom he photographed when they still lived in Detroit, Michigan. The young girl sits in the foreground with her right arm propped on the left leg of an indistinguishable figure that sits behind her. She boldly stares towards the viewer, breaking the fourth wall, and expresses an existence imbued with confidence and poise. With her strong pose and gaze, she firmly asserts her presence and reaffirms the work’s titular phrase, “So we dey.”

**Allana Clarke**

(b. 1987, lives and works in  
Detroit, MI)

*Our Bloodline*, 2020

30 Sec hair bonding glue

26 × 32 × 7 inches

Courtesy of Bennet H. Grutman



Pouring, waiting, pushing, tugging, compressing, and ripping are the gestural and performance-based acts of Allana Clarke's process that permeate her sculptural works. Emptying hundreds of bottles of hair bonding glue onto mesh beds, the artist creates sticky, leathery surfaces that she molds into discrete textured folds, ripples, and creases. Through her intensive process, Clarke imbues her work with her physical body and energetic spirit as an amplification of Black existence. Her use of hair bonding glue as her material of choice highlights the transformation of the material and the healing transcendence of subverting oppressive beauty standards tied to anti-Blackness.

**Alyssa Klauer**

(Louisiana, USA, b. 1995, lives and works in New York, NY)

*Allegory of Painting II*, 2022

Acrylic and oil on canvas

10 × 8 inches

Collection of The Kaphars



Alyssa Klauer's practice is often recognizable from her vibrant color palette, distinct composition, and painterly techniques conveying visual conceptualization of romantic visual longing, ethereality, and "Queer Time," the phenomenon of a delayed or second adolescence experienced by queer individuals when coming out later in life. Klauer's work often portrays dreamy visual narratives of feminine figures as silhouettes or ghostly faces materializing out of layers of sheer saturated paint that is splattered, dyed, and stenciled on canvas. Her *Allegory of Painting II* is a playful ode to Italian Baroque painter Artemisia Gentileschi's 1638-39 painting *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting*. Gentileschi's work is a bold statement presenting herself as the personification of art and painting, especially in a period when women like her rarely held jobs or were recognized for their work. For Klauer, this is a recognition of a prominent artist and a strong feminist affirmation.



**Felipe Baeza**

(Mexico, b. 1987, lives and works in New York, NY)

*Beyond the Vessel*, 2024

Watercolor monoprint, photolithography, screenprint, pochoir, and collage

18 5/8 × 14 5/8 inches

Published by Anderson Rach Editions; printed by Brian Shure and Andrew Betancourt  
AP1 of 20 + 10APs



Originally trained as a printmaker, Felipe Baeza has fused techniques of printing, collage, and painting to create multilayered, textured surfaces that explore notions of the body to distort conventional modes of inhabiting. His portrayal of bodies as dissected and fragmented anthropomorphic figures speaks to the topics of displacement, fugitive bodies, and futurity that migrants, racialized individuals, and queer people have come to bear while surviving in the United States.

In this presentation of prints, Baeza uses a range of printing techniques to illustrate hybrid figures in various forms of transformation. His figures are occasionally depicted in a state of concealment with flesh and limbs morphing into the background, such as the radiating red and gold tendrils seen in *Acoge al fantasma*, which translates to “Embrace the ghost.” Baeza’s figures are untethered beings who construct alternative possibilities and imaginations through their existence.



**Felipe Baeza**

(Mexico, b. 1987, lives and works in New York, NY)

*Acoge al fantasma*, 2024

Photogravure and hard ground etching with chine collé, collage, and mica dust flocking

11 ¼ × 11 ¼ inches

Published by Mullowney Printing; printed by Harry Schneider, Paul Mullowney, and Alejandra Arias Sevilla

AP2 of 15 + 6APs + 2PPs

*Flesh and Possibility*, 2024

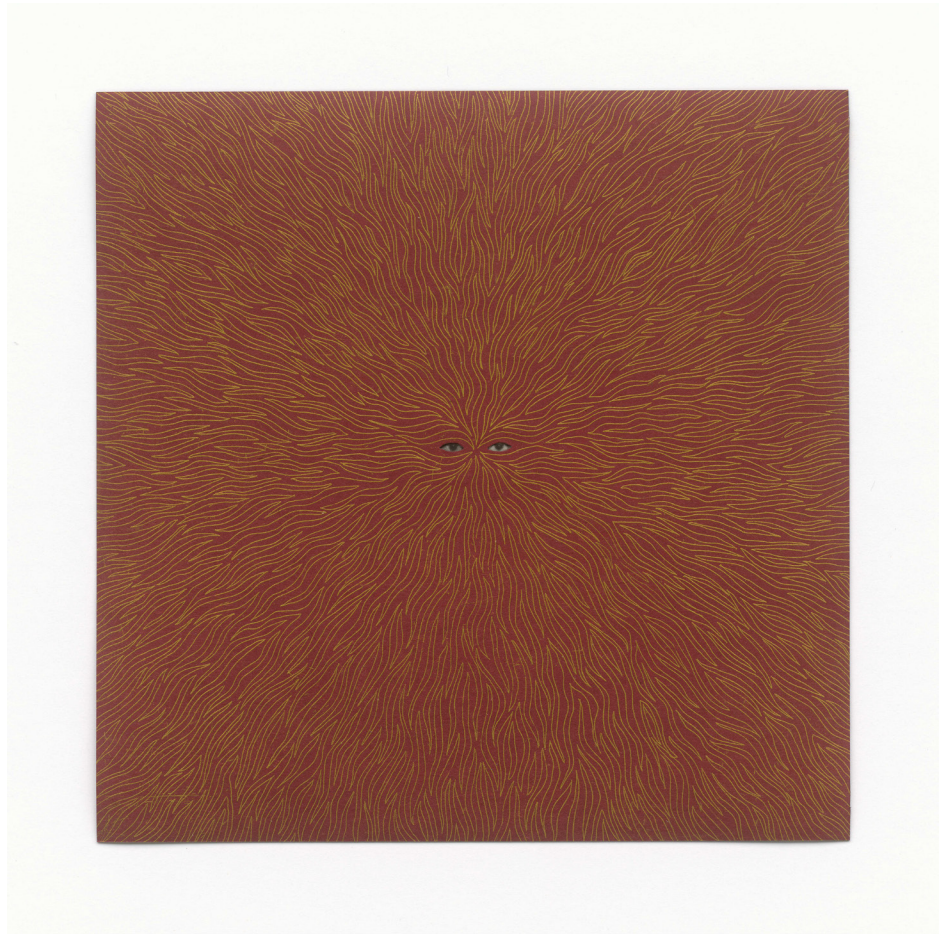
Photogravure, and hard ground etching, woodblock, with chine collé and collage

11 ¼ × 11 ¼ inches

Published by Mullowney Printing; printed by Harry Schneider, Paul Mullowney, and Alejandra Arias Sevilla

AP2 of 15 + 6APs + 2PPs

© Felipe Baeza. Courtesy Maureen Paley, London; kurimanzutto, Mexico City/New York.



**Ilana Savdie**

(Florida, USA, b. 1986, lives and works in New York, NY)

*Chispita*, 2020

Oil and beeswax on canvas  
mounted on panel

12 × 16 inches

Collection of Jason and  
Christina Price



Ilana Savdie is known for her vibrant, large-scale paintings that explore bodily, folkloric, and socio-political subjects through shapeshifting figurations and abstractions. Embracing the transformative power of performance as part of her painting process, Savdie creates undulating compositions that radiate with color, drawing the viewer into a surreal dreamscape where otherworldly bodies are fragmented, contorted, conjoined, and transfigured, occupying and navigating different kinds of space. Ungoverned by the power structures and social binaries of our world, these unearthly realms are stages upon which the grotesque, the euphoric, and the uncanny exist simultaneously.

This artwork, *Chispita*, was created while in residence at NXTHVN as part of Cohort 02's extended fellowship due to the pandemic. The title translates to "little spark" or "little bit of something" and is also a playful term that one might use as a nickname for someone spunky, energetic, or quick-tempered.



**Jamaal Peterman**

(Florida, USA, b. 1990, lives and works in New York, NY)

*Night Cap*, 2024

Acrylic, sand, vinyl glitter on canvas

48 × 48 inches

Courtesy of the Artist



Blocks, lines, and margins are integral to Jamaal Peterman's *Between the Margins* series. Vibrant hues and cool colors as well as textural elements created by sand draw viewers in to see what they might recognize as a city block or a suburban home. Peterman is interested in the built environment of cities and suburbs based on his own upbringing between a Black middle-to-upper-class town in Maryland and the city of Baltimore. With his background in real estate and construction management and interest in architecture, he utilizes geometric abstraction, color, and form to communicate hierarchies of space and mobility as well as of class and race.

His painting *Night Cap* was originally displayed within a large wall mural at The Campus in Hudson, New York for Cohort 05's culminating exhibition *Double Down*. Although Peterman has a history of creating murals in urban environments, this was the first time he placed paintings within a mural to create a more dynamic installation, amplifying his architectural play with line, color, and form.

**Daniel Tyree Gaitor-Lomack**

(New Jersey, USA, b. 1988, lives and works in Los Angeles, CA)

*Free Lancer (Prometheus)*, 2020

Wooden antique chair leg, steel fence cap, and rope on jagged stone

33 × 21 × 7 inches overall

Courtesy of the Artist



Recognized in Greek mythology as the Titan who betrayed Zeus and was bound as punishment to a rocky mountain where an eagle would eternally peck at his organs, Prometheus is the central character of Daniel T. Gaitor-Lomack's assemblage sculpture. Portrayed as a brown wooden dowel tethered by rope to a jagged rock, the central character of this myth represents themes of defiance, rebellion, fate, sacrifice, and retribution. The full title, *Free Lancer (Prometheus)*, alludes to the precarious position of freelancers as independent contractors within a gig economy. Known for his fluid process and creative practice of using found materials, the artist's works have been described as portals and windows to other realities and lessons from different dimensions, offering centuries of presence.

**Alisa Sikelianos-Carter**

(Florida, USA, b. 1983, lives and works in New York, NY)

*We Could be Related (You Know Who You are)*, 2021

Acrylic, gouache, glitter, and collage on linen with velvet obsidian

102 ½ × 44 ½ inches

Collection of Suzanne McFayden



Shimmering, shadowy black and copper-hued figures tower over us with cosmically textured and luminescent bodies set within otherworldly landscapes. The beings in Alisa Sikelianos-Carter's mixed media paintings are adorned with collaged images of Black hairstyles, braids, locs, cornrows, and afros, layered into distinct shapes that rest as crowns upon their faceless forms. Honoring her Black ancestors, the artist recognizes these figures as spiritually empowered with the capacity to transmit ancestral magic and protective healing. Embedded with black tourmaline and obsidian stones, the compositions channel layers of deep divine significance such as intuition, shielding, grounding, and guidance. They offer viewers a reminder of the ancestral presence that leads us through treacherous times.



**John Guzman**

(Texas, USA, b. 1984, lives  
and works in New Haven, CT)

*Put it away, for a while*, 2020

Oil on canvas

74 × 63 inches

Collection of The Kaphars



Before his arrival as a fellow in NXTHVN's Cohort 03 in 2021, John Guzman painted *Put it away, for a while* in 2020 while still residing in his hometown of San Antonio, Texas. During this period, Guzman's work strongly referenced bodily transformation via self-inflicted deconstruction and reconstruction. The artist was intrigued by processes of transformation and change caused by self-destructive patterns and habits, which he visualized into abstracted forms. Notable for his distinctive use of color and mark-making, Guzman creates thick textured surfaces of paint that he scrapes using a palette knife to reveal layers of thickened surface and colors beneath. Through his process, composition, and abstract visual language Guzman highlights depths of human behavior, pain, and healing.

**Esteban Ramón Pérez**

(California, USA, b. 1986, lives and works in Los Angeles, CA)

*Distorted Myths (Popo y Izta)*, 2021

Urethane on leather, metallic flake, nickel plated upholstery nails, pheasant pelt and tail feathers, peacock blade and bleached tail feathers, wood  
132 × 102 inches  
Collection of The Kaphars



The great Náhua legend of the anthropomorphized volcanoes Popocatepetl and Iztaccíhuatl is a prolific visual image within Mexican and Chicana culture. This romantic tale of the princess Izta and the warrior Popo is famously depicted in Jesús de la Helguera's 1940 painting *La leyenda de los volcanes* and is a significant visual source for murals, calendars, blankets, and lowriders. For Esteban Ramón Pérez, this imagery was common in his Southern California upbringing. As he got older, he realized the broader cultural significance of this portrayal as well as the distorted construction of Mexican nationalism that often depicts Indigenous figures in Eurocentric and hypersexualized characterizations. This awareness led him to paint *Distorted Myths (Popo y Izta)* in his own reinterpretation, highlighting the complexity of maintaining or altering culturally encoded narratives and references.

**Merik Goma**

(Michigan, USA, b. 1987, lives  
and works in New Haven, CT)

*As I Wait: Untitled #6 (Bread &  
Rose)*, 2019

C-print

40 × 60 inches

Collection of The Kaphars



Merik Goma's photography practice originated as a way to start a conversation or share a moment with strangers, an alternative approach to psychology. He carefully crafts sets and props from mundane found and repurposed materials and uses deliberately placed lighting in order to convey intimate, emotional moments for the viewer, leaving it completely open to interpretation through the viewer's own frame of reference.

*As I Wait: Untitled #6* is part of a series of photographs Goma created during his fellowship at NXTHVN as part of Cohort 01.



**Alexandria Couch**

(Ohio, USA, b. 1998, lives and works in New Haven, CT)

*Gateway I: Tears In the Grass*,  
2024

Iron gate, quilted monoprints,  
acrylic, and found fabric on  
canvas

102 × 60 inches

Courtesy of the Artist



Alexandria Couch creates mixed media artworks that delve into personal narratives derived from dreams, memories, and family archives. She utilizes techniques in printmaking, painting, quilting, and assemblage to draw viewers into ever-shifting worlds.

*Gateway I: Tears In the Grass* portrays a double headed girl on a picnic blanket, seemingly waiting to cut and eat her birthday cake as she pulls out the candles. For Couch, birthdays serve as an occasion for both celebration and deep existential self-reflection. We often see multiple body parts like heads, hands, and feet in Couch's work, a reminder that the realities that her subjects inhabit are never mutually exclusive—the figures and their subjective truths exist in constant flux. The girl's tears float upward and her braided hair stands tall, defying gravity in a powerful indicator of the dream world.

**Alisa Sikelianos-Carter**

(New York, USA, b. 1983, lives  
and works in New York, NY)

*Meet Me On The Other Side*,  
2021

Acrylic, gouache, pearl mica,  
black mica, and glitter on linen  
with velvet

103 × 44 ½ inches

Courtesy of the Artist





**Africanus Okokon**

(b. 1989, lives and works in Providence, RI)

*Give the Picture (Seconds 1-3)*,  
2022

Silkscreen on paper  
27 ½ × 25 ½ inches each  
Courtesy of the Artist  
Photos by Jason Wyche

The dialectics of forgetting and remembrance are at the core of Africanus Okokon's multidisciplinary practice. As an artist, Okokon explores shared, cultural, and personal histories mediated through moving image, performance, painting, assemblage, collage, sound, and installation. Using the tactics of fragmentation, sampling, and repetition, he appropriates private and public media to effectively produce bricolage and montage.

*Give the Picture (Seconds 1-3)* represents three seconds—one second per print—in his two-channel video installation of the same name, which examines disjointed images and illusory continuity. In the scene, an image from a family photo album is eclipsed and abstracted by a televised broadcast image, evoking the fragility of fading memory through a multicolor screenprinting process.

Okokon's critique of the media's role in shaping memory and processes of forgetting produces a reconstructed reality characterized by intentional ambiguity, embodied experience, and complex acts of remembrance.



**Kenturah Davis**

(California, USA, b. 1980, lives and works in Altadena, CA)

*Contending with Contingency V*,  
2021

Carbon pencil rubbing on  
debossed paper, mounted  
87 × 132 ½ inches

Collection of Suzanne McFayden



During her time in NXTHVN's Cohort 01 fellowship, Kenturah Davis furthered her exploration of a then not-yet-titled series for which she handwrote text from the transcript of the U.S. Senate's 1864 debate around the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, which enshrined the abolition of slavery from President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 onto multiple squares of paper panels along with a drawn self-portrait of the artist dancing.

Since then, Davis has developed this work into the *Contending with Contingency* series, using a debossed printing press technique that imprints the inkless text into larger-scale papers, leaving behind a depressed surface. A carbon pencil rubbing illustrates the dancing gestures of a choreographer mid-motion as her body glides and overlays the impressed words beneath.



## athena quispe

*Love, Light, & Darkness*, 2023

Cochineal, human fluids, ink,  
polymer, steel, pulverized citrine,  
pulverized moonstone and  
sunstone, powdered pigment

35 × 8 inches

Collection of The Kaphars

athena quispe's work navigates the space between inherited technique and contemporary material inquiry. Through the use of hand-crushed pigments, such as cochineal, mineral-based compounds, and natural dyes, she constructs surfaces that resist legibility, instead inviting slow, tactile engagement. quispe's integration of custom metalwork and textile elements reflects a sustained dialogue with Andean craft histories, not as a gesture of nostalgia, but as an active site of recontextualization. She uses a delicate method of controlled airbrush painting technique to create gradient shades and strokes onto canvas that she enwraps in her custom metalwork resembling sharpened foliage. quispe's practice interrogates the boundaries between image and object, gesture and structure, often framing the work in sculptural armatures that challenge the autonomy of the painted surface.



**Vincent Valdez**

(Texas, USA, b. 1977, lives and works in Houston, TX)

*Untitled*, 2021

Etching gravure

25 × 21 inches

Printer: Hare and Hound Press

Barbara Shuster Collection



For over twenty years, Vincent Valdez has created strong and emotionally bound artworks in his distinct style of realism and representational painting, video, drawing, sculpture, lithography, and multimedia installation. His artworks convey contemporary and historical socio-political American issues as a metaphorical method to confront injustice and inequity. Many of the figures in Valdez's works are empowered and imbued with empathy and humanity as a challenge to oppressive systems of power.

**Daniel Ramos**

(Illinois, USA, b. 1978, lives and works in New York, NY)

*Pilo In Leaves, Lampazos De Naranjo, Nuevo León, Mexico, 2016*

Archival inkjet print

30 × 40 inches

Collection of The Kaphars



For the past two decades, Daniel Ramos has created a treasure trove of images and materials gathered throughout his life and experiences living in a multitude of places, from Chicago, Illinois and San Antonio, Texas to Russia and Mexico. His work is notable for capturing everyday experiences and transforming them into photographs infused with nostalgic reflections and fleeting memories. During his time at NXTHVN and with the support of his family, primarily his wife Kristina, Ramos was able to sit with his archive and begin to organize, process, and produce prints from his image bank. The photo *Pilo In Leaves, Lampazos De Naranjo, Nuevo León, Mexico*, is from his series project *The Land of Illustrious Men*, a reference to the town slogan of Lampazos de Naranjo, the birthplace of several famous Mexican generals and hometown of his grandmother, who would tease and encourage him to become one of the illustrious men.

**Fidelis Joseph**

(Nigeria, b. 1989, lives and works in New York, NY and New Haven, CT)

*Bazara*, 2024

Oil, oil stick, acrylic spray paint, auto spray paint, and oil pastel on canvas

76 × 64 inches

Courtesy of Bennet H. Grutman



Fidelis Joseph uses vibrant colors, subconsciously driven gestures, and instinctually abstracted mark-making to create his large-scale paintings inspired by real-life experiences.

This work is titled *Bazara*, which translates to mean ‘the heat wave before the rain.’ It is inspired by his experience living in the Northeastern part of Nigeria—capturing the harsh weather and farmers’ expectation of the first raindrops that make the soil soft enough for them to tile the ground during the planting (*shuki*) season. The work also reflects on the aftermath of the planting season, when farmers can become victims of herdsmen who run their cattle onto farms to eat crops that are ready for harvest, leaving lifeless bodies of farm owners behind, under the bright blue sky.



**Eric Hart Jr.**

(Georgia, USA, b. 1999, lives and works in New York, NY)

*When I Think About Power, No. 13*, 2019

Photography printer on matte paper

30 × 45 inches

Collection of The Kaphars



In Eric Hart Jr.'s photography-series-turned-book *When I Think About Power*, he delves into themes of masculinity, religion, and queerness in the South through black and white photography. He discusses how, growing up, he was often compared to his father and had to negotiate what it meant to carry his name, look like him, and also grapple with his own queerness within the religious context and rigid ideals of masculinity in Georgia. His rich use of saturated deep blacks, grays, and white asks viewers to focus on the expressions and bodies of Black men and boys beyond the framing of queerness that solely utilizes bright colors and feminine motifs.

In his photograph *When I Think About Power, No. 13*, Eric positions queer subjects among traditional symbols of American hypermasculinity—a vintage car, a rifle, white button-ups. These symbols, often wielded to assert dominance and conformity, are recontextualized as tools of aesthetic subversion. The image not only challenges the visual language of masculinity but rewrites it, imagining a queer body not in opposition to power, but as its author.

**Warith Taha**

(California, USA, b. 1987, lives  
and works in Oakland, CA)

*A Constellation is an Agreement  
Between Stars*, 2022

Acrylic on sculptural stretcher  
with found objects

29 × 25 × 2 ½ inches

Collection of the Artist



Transformation is a core element of Warith Taha's practice. The artist draws from a range of investigations, from Black family photo archives to memory, abstraction, assemblage of found objects, and collages. Taha tenderly creates autobiographical paintings that redefine material expectations and address his relationship to time, space, and material as a Black queer individual. His process is emotional, fluid, and improvisational. In his work *A Constellation is an Agreement Between Stars*, the artist utilized a range of found material sourced in New Haven, Connecticut during his NXTHVN fellowship. Fragmenting, painting, tying, and fusing, Taha created an assemblage that transfigures discarded furniture, forgotten magazine clippings, and woven swaths into a sculptural canvas of yellow beaming from the background.

**Kenturah Davis**

(California, USA, b. 1980, lives  
and works in Altadena, CA)

*Recalibration*, 2019

Oil painting applied with rubber  
letter stamps on colored ground  
with color monoprint on Igarashi  
Kozo paper

29 × 21 inches

Courtesy of Bennet H. Grutman





**Layo Bright**

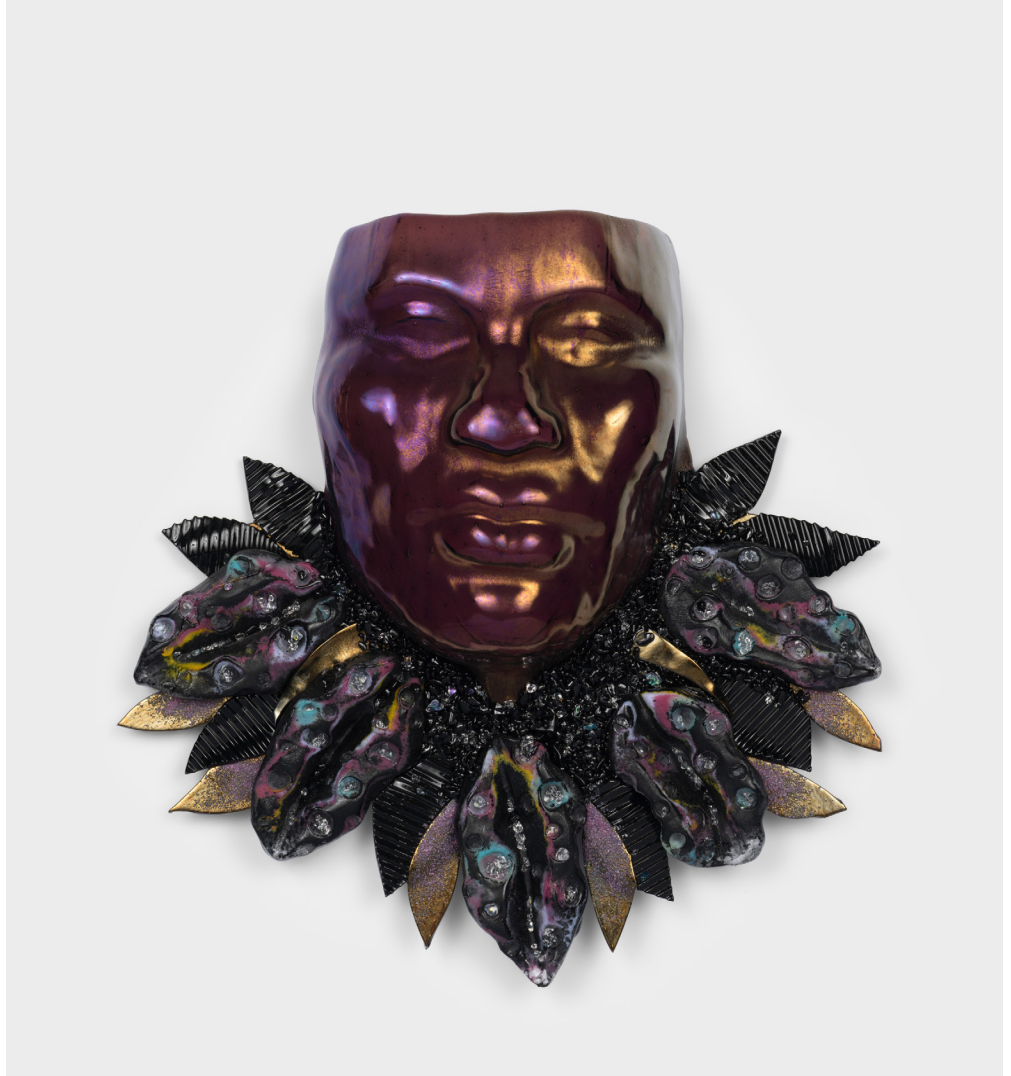
(Nigeria, b. 1991, lives and works in New York, NY)

*Visions VII*, 2022

Kiln formed glass

14 ½ × 15 × 4 inches

Courtesy of the Artist



In 2021-2022, during her fellowship at NXTHVN, Layo Bright furthered her exploration of glassmaking that began in 2020 right before the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were put in place. Bright was interested in how glass worked as a medium with various techniques and moldings offering different shapes or forms for expression in both abstract and figurative styles. This is visible in her initial process as well as her current methodology.

Bright's *Visions* series began at NXTHVN. The artist merges visages with foliage, taking inspiration from the natural environment and ancestry to create sculptural works that consider themes of nurture and legacy. Made from glass, these forms mirror fragile yet complex relationships in the context of colonial histories. Her most recent *Bloom* series continues her ornamental style and foregrounds her reverence for matrilineal legacy in a direction that embraces floral forms as symbolic of abundance, care, and adornment.



**Anindita Dutta**

(India, b. 1973, lives and works in  
New Haven, CT)

*Sex, Sexuality, and Society –  
BOTSWANA, 2023*

Used shoes, animal horn, hide

91 × 81 × 13 inches

Courtesy of the Artist

Anindita Dutta creates elaborate sculptures from deconstructed materials such as shoes, animal horns, and hides found at thrift stores. Her work is a conveyance of deep emotion and reflection on the complexities of gender in social context. The focus of her *Sex, Sexuality, and Society* series is on the issues of stereotypes and exploitation affecting all women in society. The title of this piece is a reference to Botswana having among the highest reported rates of gender-based violence (GBV) of any country. Dutta intricately sculpts black high-heeled boots with horns conjoined with the heels onto the black hide surface. The result is a textured surface of pulsating horns and heels conveying dark emotions relating to the silenced, forgotten, and hidden realities affecting so many women today.

**Layo Bright**

(Nigeria, b. 1991, lives and works  
in New York, NY)

*Magenta Bloom*, 2024

Kiln formed and sand blasted  
glass, 23k gold

14 × 11 ½ × 4 inches

Courtesy of the Artist





**Capt. James Stovall V**

(California, USA, b. 1986, lives and works in Altadena, CA)

*Shirley*, 2023

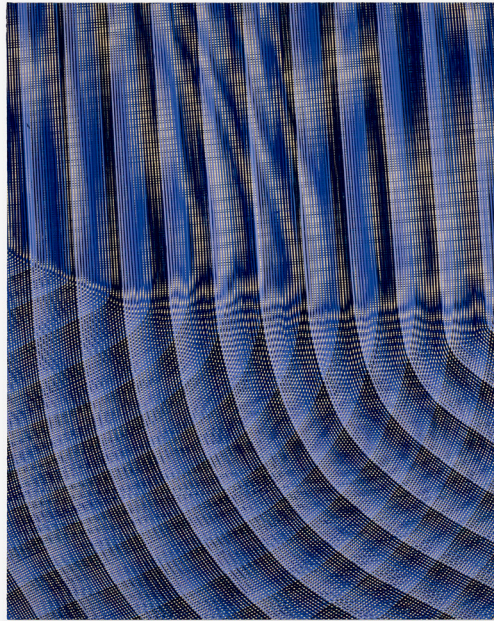
Acrylic, oil pastel, and charcoal on linen with wooden ledge and porcelain figures

38 ½ × 48 inches

Courtesy of the Artist



In bell hooks's book *Art on My Mind*, the author and theorist urged the art world to “embrace the spirit of change that calls us all to deepen our awareness, to intensify our commitment to art as the practice of freedom.” For Capt. James Stovall V, this has been his primary intention and ethos for his practice. As a self-taught artist and muralist with a background in advertising, Stovall V paints in a graffiti-like tag style based on his lived experiences, looking at the ways memory falls apart and the power those gaps, silences, and distortions can hold. Stovall V is interested in how personal experiences can push back against dominant histories and open up space for new ways of remembering and imagining. In his most recent series, he recontextualizes religious and biblical iconographies, such as Jesus Christ. In his painting titled *Shirley*, Stovall V transgresses the typical depiction of Jesus as a white savior by disrupting the canonical correlation between whiteness and divinity. The artist adorns baby Jesus with a gold Jesus piece chain, black ski mask, and tattoo with the name Shirley on his left shoulder. In doing this, he visually reclaims Jesus as a hood baby.



**Alexander Puz**

(California, USA, b. 1989, lives and works in Baltimore, MD)

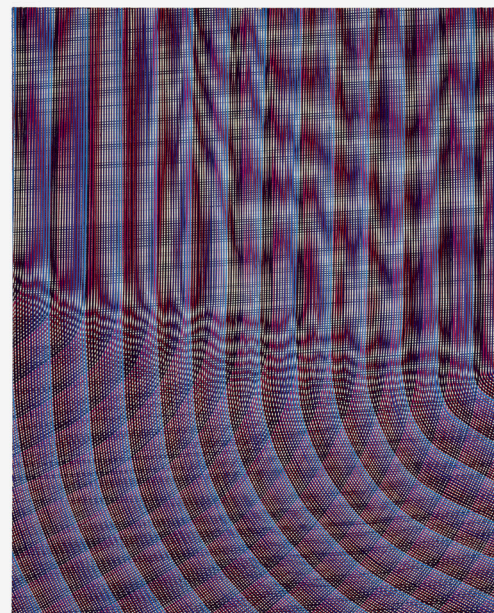
*Bridge From the Actual to the Possible VIII, 2024*

*Bridge From the Actual to the Possible IV, 2024*

Flashe vinyl acrylic on canvas

60 × 48 inches each

Courtesy of the Artist



Alexander Puz meticulously creates large-scale paintings that use lines, color theory, and studies from the field of neuroscience to attempt to alter viewers' emotional states. His art practice is in response to his upbringing in a family coping with mental illness and his subsequent experiences working on a suicide hotline.

In this work, originally displayed as a triptych at The Campus in Hudson, New York for Cohort 05's culminating exhibition *Double Down*, Puz plays with the creation of a horizon and utilizes the graphic design colors of RGB (red, green [not on view], and blue) to prompt viewers to consider hope beyond what we can see, especially when in states of lower frequency or depression.

## ABOUT THE CURATOR

Marissa Del Toro is Assistant Director of Exhibitions and Programs at NXTHVN in New Haven, CT. Since 2021, Del Toro has also worked with Museums Moving Forward, a data-driven initiative to support greater equity and accountability in art museum workplaces. Previously, she served as 2021-2022 Curatorial Fellow at NXTHVN and as the 2018-2020 Diversifying Art Museum Leadership Initiative (DAMLI) Curatorial Fellow at Phoenix Art Museum. She holds an MA in Art History from the University of Texas at San Antonio, and is originally from Southern California, where she received her BA in Art History from the University of California, Riverside.

## ABOUT NXTHVN

NXTHVN is a groundbreaking institution that combines the best of arts and entrepreneurship. Through access, education, programming, and impact investing, NXTHVN launches the careers of artists and curators and strengthens the livelihood of its local community. Located in the historically African American Dixwell neighborhood of New Haven, CT, the expansive adapted-reuse campus houses gallery, studio, library, office, coworking, performance, and living spaces in addition to a forthcoming storefront cafe. Cornerstone programs include a renowned fellowship to educate and accelerate emerging and underrepresented artists and curators, paid arts apprenticeships for local high school students, and business incubation to nurture cultural and capital value in the neighborhood. Co-founded in 2018 by acclaimed visual artist Titus Kaphar and private equity investor Jason Price—both longtime residents of New Haven—NXTHVN represents a new national arts model for developing an equitable society. Learn more at [www.nxthvn.com](http://www.nxthvn.com).



## ABOUT THE FORD FOUNDATION GALLERY

Opened in March 2019 at the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice in New York City, the Ford Foundation Gallery spotlights artwork that wrestles with difficult questions, calls out injustice, and points the way toward a fair and just future. The gallery functions as a responsive and adaptive space and one that serves the public in its openness to experimentation, contemplation, and conversation. Located near the United Nations, it draws visitors from around the world, addresses questions that cross borders, and speaks to the universal struggle for human dignity.

The gallery is free and open to the public Monday through Saturday, 11 a.m.–6 p.m. It is accessible to the public through the Ford Foundation building entrance on 43rd Street, east of Second Avenue.

## FORD FOUNDATION GALLERY

320 East 43rd Street  
New York, NY 10017  
[www.fordfoundation.org/gallery](http://www.fordfoundation.org/gallery)

## ABOUT THE FORD FOUNDATION

The Ford Foundation is an independent organization working to address inequality and build a future grounded in justice. For more than 85 years, it has supported visionaries on the frontlines of social change worldwide, guided by its mission to strengthen democratic values, reduce poverty and injustice, promote international cooperation, and advance human achievement. Today, with an endowment of \$16 billion, the foundation has headquarters in New York and 10 regional offices across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Learn more at [www.fordfoundation.org](http://www.fordfoundation.org).

## EXHIBITION LENDERS

Courtesy of the Artists, Bennet H. Grutman, The Kaphars, Suzanne McFayden, Jason and Christina Price, and Barbara Shuster

Printed on the occasion of the exhibition *THIS IS NOT A RETREAT! NXTHVN Through the Years* (June 5 – August 2, 2025). Ford Foundation Gallery and NXTHVN would like to extend a very special thanks to our many partners and collaborators.

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**NXTHVN**

**Ford  
Foundation  
Gallery**

# NXTHVN

## NXTHVN ALUMNI THROUGH THE YEARS

### Cohort 01

Zalika Azim  
Felipe Baeza  
Jaclyn Conley  
Kenturah Davis  
Merik Goma  
Riham Majeed  
Christie Neptune  
Alexandria Smith  
Vaughn Spann  
Ana Tuazon

### Cohort 02

Allana Clarke  
Daniel Tyree Gaitor-Lomack  
Claire Kim  
Jeffrey Meris  
Esteban Ramón Pérez  
Michelle Phương Ting  
Ilana Savdie  
Alisa Sikelianos-Carter  
Vincent Valdez

### Cohort 03

Layo Bright  
Marissa Del Toro  
John Guzman  
Jamillah Hinson  
Alyssa Klauer  
Africanus Okokon  
Patrick Quarm  
Daniel Ramos  
Warith Taha

### Cohort 04

Anindita Dutta  
Donald Guevara  
Ashanté Kindle  
athena quispe  
Edgar Serrano  
Cornelia Stokes  
Capt. James Stovall V  
Kiara Cristina Ventura

### Cohort 05

Adrian Armstrong  
Alexandria Couch  
Marquita Flowers  
Eric Hart Jr.  
Fidelis Joseph  
Eugene Macki  
Clare Patrick  
Jamaal Peterman  
Alexander Puz

### Cohort 06

Baris Gokturk  
Kwamé Azure Gomez  
Patrick Henry  
Kristy Hughes  
Christopher Paul Jordan  
Reeha Lim  
Napoles Marty  
Rigoberto Luna