

5 May 2025

Ford Foundation Gallery presents
THIS IS NOT A RETREAT!
NXTHVN Through the Years



Image detail: Patrick Quarm, *So We Dey*, 2024, Mixed media: acrylic and oil on African print fabric, wooden cornice, 75 x 58 x 30 inches, 3 layers. Courtesy of the Artist.

Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice | 320 E 43rd Street, New York

On View: June 5-August 2, 2025

Opening Event: June 5, 2025 | 5-7pm

Gallery Hours: Monday-Saturday | 11am-6pm

New York, NY – The [Ford Foundation Gallery](https://fordfoundation.org/gallery) and [NXTHVN](https://nxthvn.org) are pleased to present *THIS IS NOT A RETREAT! NXTHVN Through the Years*, opening on June 5th with a celebration from 5 to 7 p.m. to honor the visionary model of arts incubator NXTHVN and the thriving artistic community that surrounds it. Building on their tradition of concluding each cohort's year

with a culminating show, this exhibition features virtuosic work by alumni artists from the first five years of the program.

Since 2018, NXTHVN has catalyzed the careers of 41 artists and 12 curators through a 10-month intensive fellowship program of mentorship and professional development. Co-founded by renowned multidisciplinary artist Titus Kaphar and impact investor Jason Price, NXTHVN is a space where artists expand their skills, networks, and confidence. The exhibition foregrounds the vital significance of the networks, camaraderie, and connections that take root through art residencies. At a time when initiatives for the arts and unconsidered individuals are vulnerable, NXTHVN stands firm in supporting the work of talented artists and curators from around the world.

Featuring artists from countries around the globe and curated by Marissa Del Toro, *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 artistic ecosystem. Each year, 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 strengthened community. This exhibition celebrates the individuals who have contributed, experienced, supported, and made NXTHVN into a prominent institution where access, knowledge, independence, excellence, artistic liberation, and innovation flourish.

The exhibition’s title suggests not just the program’s rigorousness but also the bold new ways of understanding and relating that the works draw into view. In upending the framework of a “retreat,” the show invites reflection on the possibilities that come forward through active formal experimentation expressing new ideas in a collective context and spirit. In keeping with the truth that nothing exists in a vacuum, this exhibition’s tangible poetics consider objects and ideas brought together in material movements over perceptual landscapes. This ingenuity surfaces layers of being, memory, identity, time, self-discovery, and belonging, articulating complex and subtle facets of experience to deepen connections.

Spanning media including drawing, painting, prints, installation, etchings, and sculpture, reimagined everyday elements and otherworldly scenes intermingle to urge reconsideration of the received order of things, suggesting forms of collective dreaming. Through diverse techniques and mediums, portraiture in the show explores personal journeys through lenses of time, experience, and empowerment. Narratives conjured by color, shadow, contrast, and form pose questions about identity, memory, and ways toward greater understanding. An

emphasis on process and materiality invites contemplation of the continuity and transformation of selves in cultural and social contexts, and the interconnections that lead communities forward.

Just before and in tandem with this show, James Cohan Gallery and NXTHVN will present a group exhibition of work by NXTHVN's Cohort 06 Fellows, titled *The Things Left Unsaid*, from May 8th to June 21st, 2025 at James Cohan's Grand Street location, opening with a reception on Thursday, May 8th from 6-8 PM. For more details on this exhibition please visit the [James Cohan website](#). For more information on registration for the opening celebration for *THIS IS NOT A RETREAT!* please follow the Ford Foundation Gallery's social media.

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.

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.

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 accessible to the public through the Ford Foundation building entrance on 43rd Street, east of Second Avenue.

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.

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