

art | Melanated

PRESENTS

SAVAGE

THE FUTURE IS OURS

EXHIBITION CATALOG



Band of Vices

FEB 14 - MAR 14, 2026

SAVAGE

2026

THE FUTURE IS OURS

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CURATORIAL STATEMENT

As a nomadic gallery, Art Melanated has been on a continual quest to bring art to the people, activating unconventional spaces and meeting audiences where they are. Along this journey, we became increasingly aware of how many exceptional artists, particularly those working outside the art world's major hubs, remain overlooked, with limited opportunities for their work to be seen or sustained within traditional art systems.

Inspired by the legacy of Augusta Savage, who built platforms that supported thousands of artists through access, mentorship, and care, we created

SAVAGE as a global emerging artist competition. Augusta Savage understood that meaningful support requires more than visibility alone; it demands infrastructure and long-term commitment. That belief remains central to this exhibition.

SAVAGE was conceived to shine a light on artists from historically underserved communities while expanding the perspective of our collecting community. This year's exhibition is organized around the theme *The Future Is Ours*, a phrase that reflects both intention and agency.

SAVAGE is offered not as a conclusion, but as a beginning. It reflects a belief in sustained presence and collective responsibility, inviting our community to remain engaged beyond the exhibition itself. The project asks us to consider new ways of supporting artists and to approach patronage as an ongoing relationship rooted in curiosity, care, and commitment.



- Sol Aponte & Jennia Fredrique Aponte

SAVAGE

EMERGING ARTIST COMPETITION

SAVAGE is a global emerging artist competition created to identify and elevate new voices in contemporary visual art. Produced by Art Melanated, the initiative supports artistic development through exhibition, mentorship, and professional opportunity, positioning emerging practices within a broader cultural and institutional landscape.

The competition honors the legacy of Augusta Savage (1892–1962), a pioneering sculptor, educator, and activist whose leadership during the 1930s and 1940s expanded access to the arts for Black creatives. As the first director of the Harlem Community Art Center, Savage cultivated a vital environment for mentorship and artistic exchange, supporting artists such as Jacob Lawrence, Gwendolyn Knight, and Norman Lewis, and countless others. Her advocacy challenged exclusionary practices within museums, galleries, and public art programs, while insisting on the centrality of Black artists within cultural life. Her belief in building lasting infrastructure for artists continues to inform the foundation of SAVAGE

The inaugural open call drew hundreds of submissions from artists across the world. A panel of esteemed judges undertook a careful, multi-stage review process, evaluating each submission for artistic rigor, conceptual strength, and cultural resonance.

From this process, eleven finalists were selected to exhibit at Band of Vices in Los Angeles from February 14 to March 14, 2026. One artist will be awarded a \$10,000 grand prize, reflecting Art Melanated's commitment to sustaining artistic excellence and supporting the long-term development of emerging artists.

SAVAGE is both a competition and a platform, grounded in the belief that access to the arts is a matter of equity and that nurturing emerging talent is essential to the future of culture.

MEET THE 2026

SAVAGE

JUDGES

Art Melanated extends sincere thanks to the judges and advisors whose time, care, and discernment were essential to the selection process.

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AYESHA SELDEN

Wealth Advisor, Art Collector



Ayesha Selden is a financial services executive and art collector whose professional and philanthropic commitments reflect a passion for patronage in the visual arts. Based in Los Angeles and Houston, she has served as a Managing Partner and Wealth Advisor with Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC since 2000.

Ayesha is actively engaged in artist patronage and institutional advancement. She serves on the Tate North America Acquisitions Committee, the Collectors Committee of the National Gallery of Art, and the African and African Diasporic Art Committee of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. She supports the acquisition and exhibition of works by historically underrepresented artists, with a focus on expanding the canon of postwar and contemporary art.

HILL HARPER

Humanitarian, Actor, Entrepreneur



Hill Harper is a cultural patron, collector, and arts advocate whose engagement with visual art spans nearly three decades. Deeply committed to Black cultural production, he has built a collection grounded in narrative power, historical continuity, and social impact. His stewardship reflects a belief in art as both cultural inheritance and civic responsibility. He is currently in the process of establishing a museum in Detroit, expanding public access to art while anchoring creative legacy in a city central to Black history and innovation.

Harper's broader work across philanthropy, education, and economic development reflects a sustained investment in equity and cultural sustainability, positioning the arts as a vital force in shaping collective futures.

JOY SIMMONS M.D.

Physician, Art Collector



V. Joy Simmons, MD is an art collector and philanthropist who has supported the work of artists of African descent and more broadly, of artists whose work is informed and inspired by Black culture. Recognizing the importance of sustaining a healthy arts ecosystem, Dr. Simmons mentors the next generation of art collectors and cultivates interest in supporting the networks of culture that sustain creativity. She has played a vital role in the establishment and growth of various small to mid-size institutions that now help define Los Angeles's vibrant cultural landscape.

Dr. Simmons currently serves as a Commissioner of the Smithsonian American Art Museum and is on the Board of Directors of the California African American Museum.

KENDALL HURNS

Founder of Arte Haus Studios



Kendall Hurns is a Chicago-born entrepreneur and multidisciplinary creative working across the realms of fashion, art, sport, and design. He began his career in sports and entertainment, collaborating with leading NBA athletes, and has since built a dynamic presence at the intersection of culture and commerce.

As the founder of Arte Haus Studios, a creative studio dedicated to empowering artists and driving cultural innovation, Hurns has established himself as a curator, strategist, and advocate for emerging talent. His work reflects a deep commitment to expanding representation, fostering collaboration, and creating access to meaningful opportunities within historically exclusive industries.

KEVIN A. WILLIAMS

Contemporary Artist, Entrepreneur



Kevin A. Williams is a Chicago-born painter whose four-decade career has established him as a foundational figure in contemporary Black figurative art. Emerging from Chicago's South Side, he developed a visual language rooted in storytelling, ritual, and everyday Black life, imagery that has circulated globally and shaped the visual culture of multiple generations. His work operates as both fine art and cultural record, capturing intimacy, resilience, and collective memory.

His paintings are held in prominent private and public collections and presented across institutional and widely viewed contexts. His body of work stands as a living archive of Black experience. He lives and works in Atlanta, Georgia.

MASHONDA TIFRERE

Founder of ArtLeadHer, Art Genesis



Mashonda Tifere is a trailblazing force in international art and activism, sparking transformation with unparalleled vision. As the Founder of ArtLeadHer and Art Genesis, sustainable platforms empowering women artists and nurturing emerging and established talents, she has curated over 50 exhibitions since 2016. Her visionary programming showcases luminaries like Kennedy Yanko, Swoon, Derrick Adams and Bisa Butler.

She has fostered impactful collaborations with initiatives like Beyoncé's BeyGOOD and Gucci's Chime for Change, as well as esteemed institutions such as The Whitney Museum and PAMM. Additionally, she has curated exhibitions for galleries and art fairs across the globe.

DR. TEDDY RASHAAN

Producer, Curator



dr. teddy raShaan is a multifaceted, award-winning producer, curator, and storyteller. Currently, dr. teddy serves as the senior Curator of Religion at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) in Washington, D.C.

Teddy has created and curated innovative projects that have highlighted the influence of digital technologies, media, and visual art in capturing, preserving, and telling the stories of Black spiritual and religious life in the Americas. Most recently, dr. teddy founded Art Like ME Inc., a 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to help empower Black and Brown boys and men cultivate emotional intelligence through art and culture.

TERRELL TILFORD

Founder & Creative Director of Band of Vices



Terrell Tilford is a cultural force who, for over 25 years, has amplified artists and elevated brands through the power of community, creativity, and connection. As Founder & Creative Director of Band of Vices, Tilford Art Group, along with the launch of his new initiative, L.I.F.E. (Living in Full Expression), his multi-hyphenate career has earned him front-page features in both the Los Angeles Times and The New York Times, as well as profiles in Los Angeles Magazine, LA Weekly, The Hollywood Reporter, and an upcoming project with Louis Vuitton.

Tilford's creative partnerships span institutional and corporate collaborations including The Getty, the LA Lakers, Geffen Playhouse and AirBnB Experience and more.

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MEET THE 2026

SAVAGE

FINALISTS

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ON VIEW



Band of Vices

FEB 14 - MAR 14, 2026

1700 S. SANTA FE AVE #371 | LOS ANGELES, C 90021



Ahkeem Shaw
Launch Day, 2025

INQUIRE

AHKEEM SHAW



Taking Flight, 2025

Oil and Acrylic on Canvas
40 x 30 in | 101.6 x 76.2 cm

\$5,000 - SOLD



Leap of Faith, 2025

Oil and Acrylic on Canvas
40 x 30 in | 101.6 x 76.2 cm

\$5,000 - SOLD



Launch Day, 2025

Oil and Acrylic on Canvas
40 x 30 in | 101.6 x 76.2 cm

\$5,000 - SOLD



Asia Estelle
HAIR Vessel 10, 2026

INQUIRE

ASIA ESTELLE



HAIR Vessel 10, 2026

Ceramic

11 x 11 x 13.75 in | 27.9 x 27.9 x 34.9 cm

~~\$2,700~~ - SOLD



Tension Vessel 3, 2025

Ceramic

7 x 7 x 6 in | 17.8 x 17.8 x 15.2 cm

\$1,600



Tension Vessel 4, 2025

Ceramic

7.5 x 7.5 x 7.5 in | 19.05 x 19.05 x 19.05 cm

\$1,600



Crystal Noir

Those Who Held The Sky Open, 2025

INQUIRE

CRYSTAL NOIR



Lineages Of The Unbroken Blue, 2025

Oil on Canvas

48 x 36 in | 121.92 x 91.44 cm

\$4,500



Those Who Held The Sky Open, 2025

Oil on Canvas

48 x 36 in | 121.92 x 91.44 cm

~~\$4,500~~ - SOLD



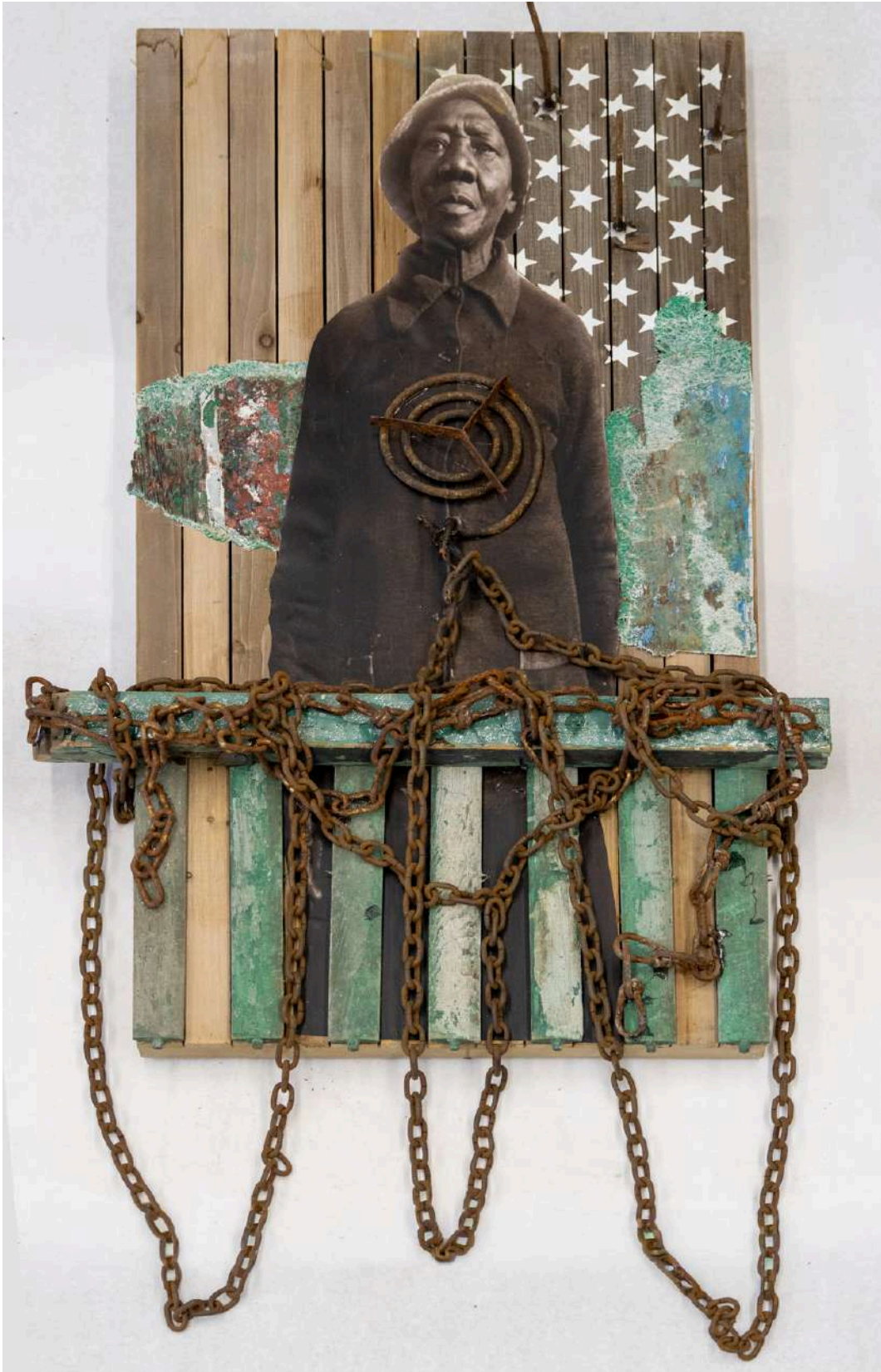
The Breath Between Two, 2025

(diptych)

Oil on Canvas

48 x 72 in | 121.92 x 182.88 cm

\$8,500



Danielle Scott
Santeria, 2025

INQUIRE

DANIELLE SCOTT



Santeria, 2025

Mixed Media, Wood, Metal
48 x 36 in | 121.92 x 91.44 cm

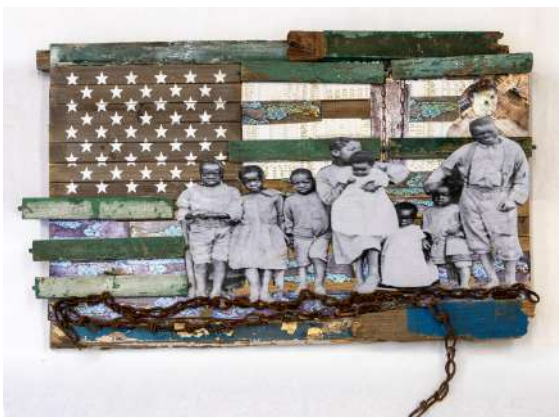
~~\$8,000~~ - SOLD



Diaspora, 2025

Mixed Media, Wood
33 x 19 in | 83.82 x 48.26 cm

\$6,500



American Bondage, 2025

Mixed Media, Wood, Metal
40 x 21 in | 101.6 x 53.34 cm

\$6,500



Devin Wesley

We Were Promised More Than This, 2025

INQUIRE

DEVIN WESLEY

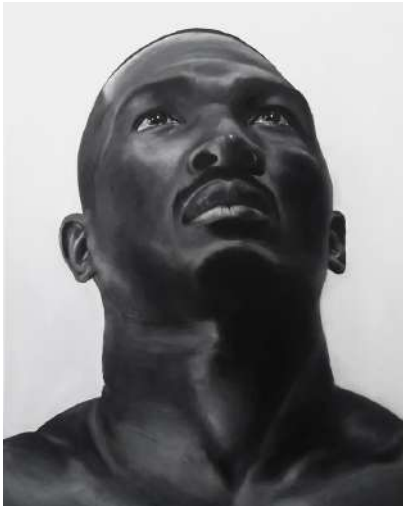


We Were Promised More Than This, 2025

Oil on Canvas

40 x 30 in | 101.6 x 76.2 cm

~~\$4,500~~ - SOLD



The Body Remembers Softness, 2025

Oil on Canvas

40 x 30 in | 101.6 x 76.2 cm

\$4,000



All Caps, 2024

Oil on Canvas

72 x 36 in | 182.88 x 91.44 cm

~~\$6,000~~ - SOLD



Enam Gbewonyo

Cyclical Vein - Concentric Growth Noire 1, 2023

INQUIRE

ENAM GBEWONYO



Luminous Black Matter I, 2024

Mixed Media, Textile on Canvas
51.5 x 42 in | 130.81 x 106.68 cm

\$10,500



Dada's (Grandma's) Invocation VI, 2024

Mixed Media, Paper
32 x 27 in | 81.28 x 68.58 cm

\$5,500



Cyclical Vein - Concentric Growth Noire 1, 2023

Mixed Media, Textile
150 x 80 in | 381 x 203.22cm

\$12,000



Garry Grant

*The Fall of the Benin Empire:
The Reassessment 1897, 2022*

INQUIRE

GARRY GRANT



The Fall of the Benin Empire: The Reassessment 1897, 2022

Mixed Media, Metal Leaf on Panel
41 x 29 in | 104.14 x 73.66 cm

\$10,000



Portal of Hope: The Doorway of Return/Doorway of No Return, 2025

Mixed Media, Metal Leaf on Panel
56 x 34 in | 142.24 x 86.36 cm

\$10,000



Lukasa Memory Board I: Code of the Ancestors, 2025

Mixed Media with Metal Leaf on Panel
27 x 23 in | 68.58 x 58.42 cm

\$5,500 - SOLD



Jess Owens-Young
I Know Whose I Am, 2025

INQUIRE

JESS OWENS-YOUNG



I Know Whose I Am, 2025

Mixed Media on Paper
30 x 22 in | 76.2 x 55.88 cm

\$1,500 - SOLD



Liberation is our Legacy at the Club, 2025

Mixed Media, Collage
30 x 22 in | 76.2 x 55.88 cm

\$1,500 - SOLD



Our Engines Been Running, 2025

Mixed Media, Collage
30 x 22 in | 76.2 x 55.88 cm

\$1,500 - SOLD



Jonathan Barber

Untitled, 2025

INQUIRE

JONATHAN BARBER



Spectacle, 2025

Soft Pastel on Paper

56 x 43 in | 142.24 x 109.22 cm

\$6,000 - SOLD

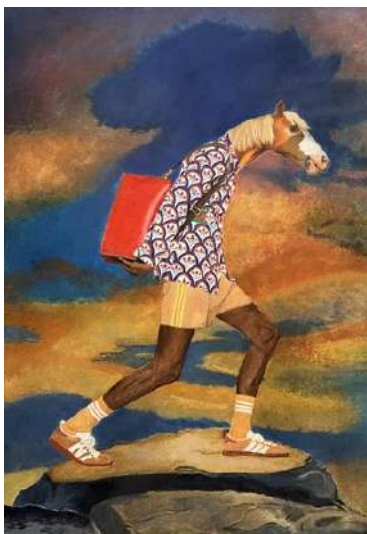


Untitled, 2025

Soft Pastel on Paper

56 x 43 in | 142.24 x 109.22 cm

\$6,000 - SOLD

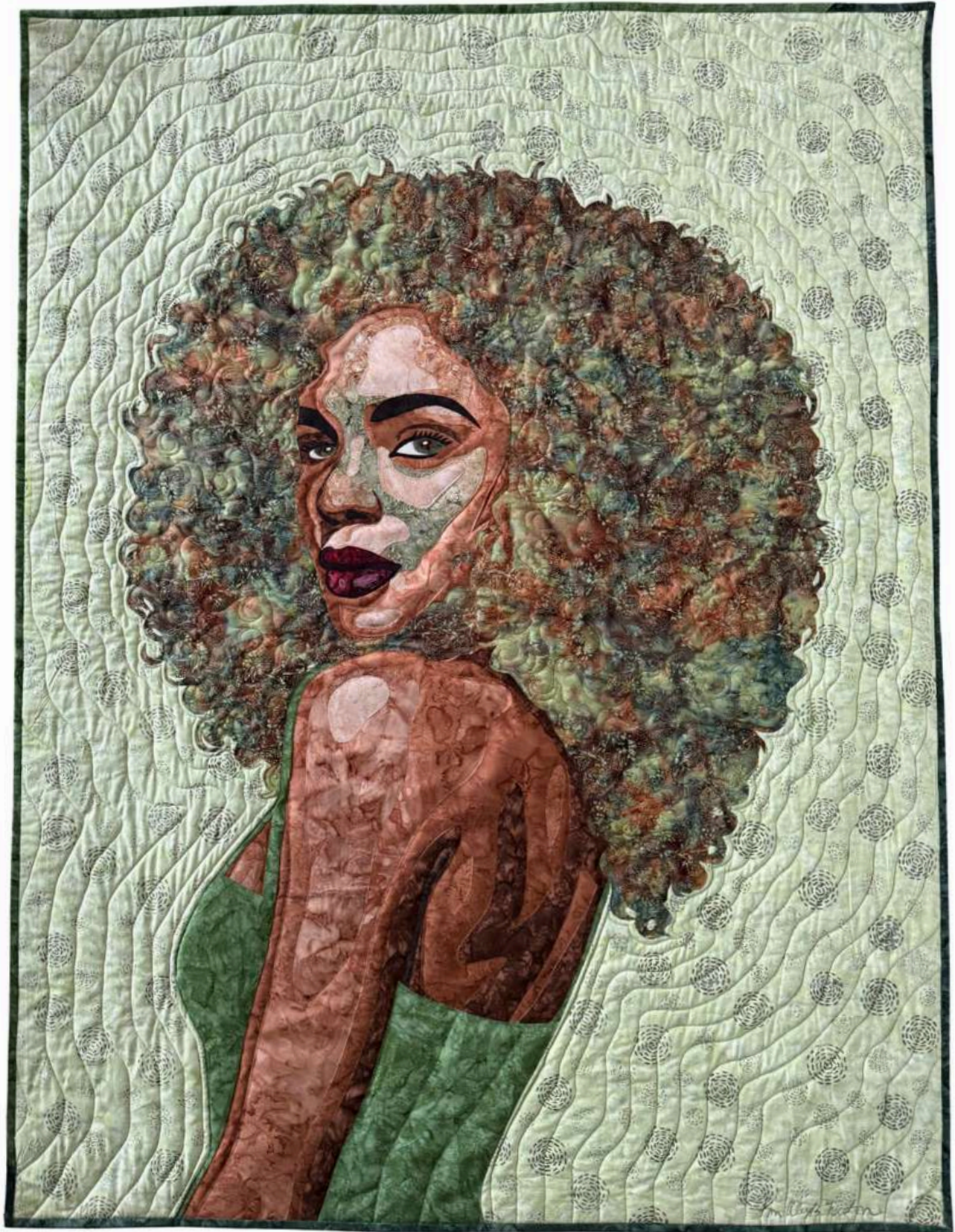


The Equestrian, 2025

Soft Pastel on Paper

23 x 18 in | 58.42 x 45.72 cm

\$1,750 - SOLD



Kim Alexis Newton
She is Evergreen, 2025

INQUIRE

KIM ALEXIS NEWTON



Ascend, 2025

Mixed Textile, 100% Cotton Indonesian Batik and Cotton Batting, Quilted

54 x 44 in | 137.16 x 111.76 cm

\$8,000



Blooming is Her Birthright, 2025

Mixed Textile, 100% Cotton Indonesian Batik and Cotton Batting, Quilted

54 X 40.5 in | 137.16 x 102.87 cm

~~\$7,500~~ - SOLD



She is Evergreen, 2025

Mixed Textile, 100% Cotton Indonesian Batik and Cotton Batting, Quilted

54 x 44 in | 137.16 x 111.76 cm

\$8,000

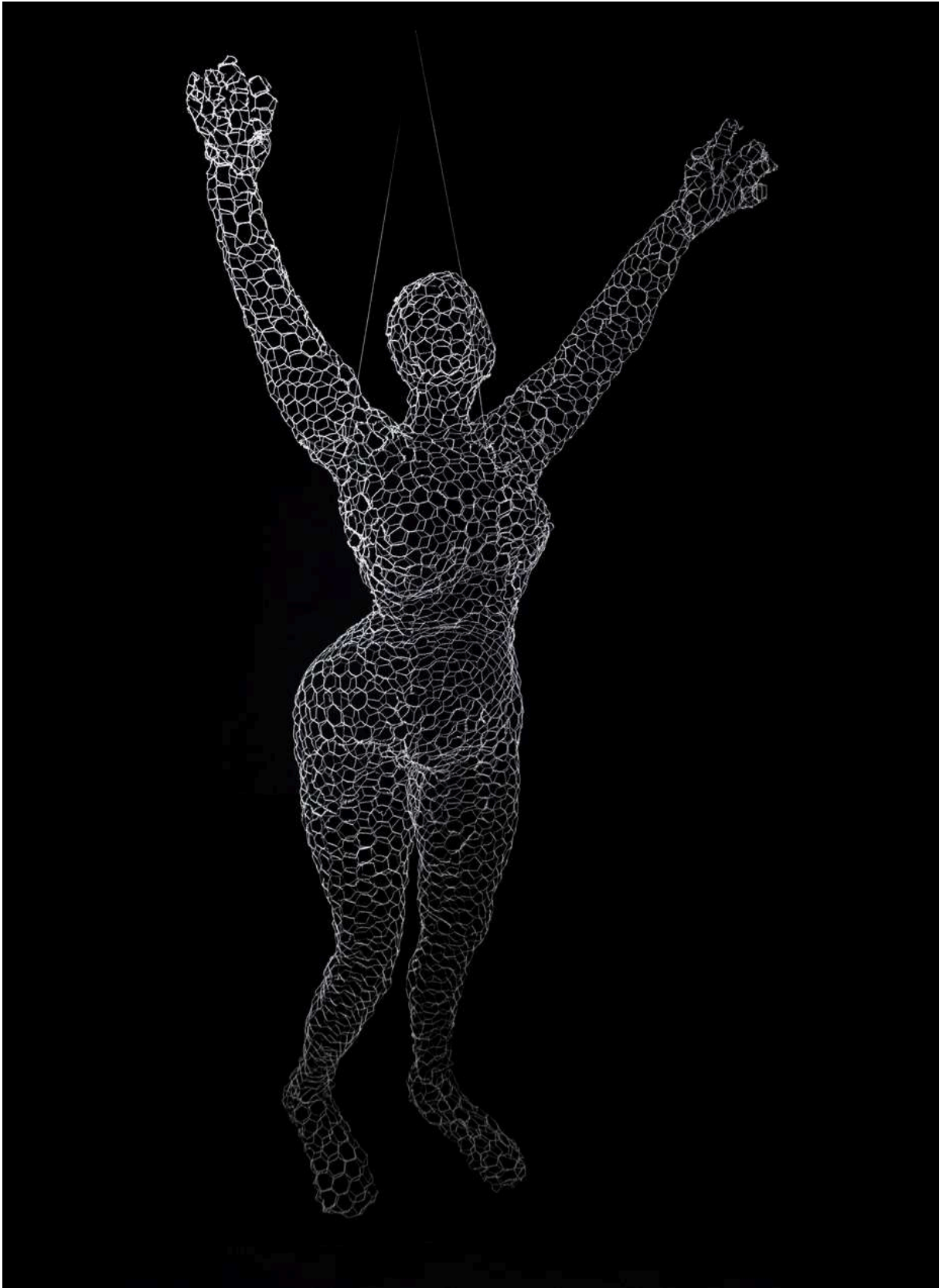


Hope is a Black Woman, 2025

Mixed Textile, 100% Cotton Indonesian Batik and Cotton Batting, Quilted

55 x 54 in | 139.7 x 137.16 cm

\$9,000



Rikiesha Metzger

My Black is Beautiful While Worshiping, 2025

INQUIRE

RIKIESHA METZGER

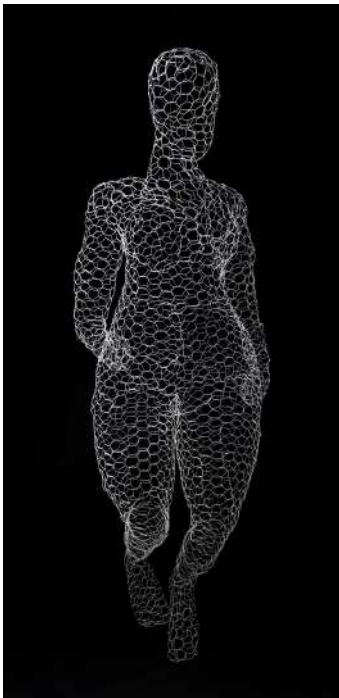


My Black is Beautiful While Worshipping, 2025

Sculpture

74 x 24 x 14 in | 187.96 x 60.96 x 35.56 cm

~~\$8,000~~ - SOLD



My Black is Beautiful While Confident, 2025

Sculpture

62 x 18 x 14 in | 157.48 x 60.96 x 35.56 cm

\$8,000

2026

SAVAGE

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

KEVIN WEST

The 2026 SAVAGE Alumni Spotlight features Indianapolis-based artist Kevin West, whose trajectory reflects the broader impact of Art Melanated's curatorial and educational initiatives beyond the framework of competition alone.

West was first introduced to Art Melanated during the inaugural Black Art Empowerment Summit, where an initial connection led to an introduction to his work and visual language. The introduction led to West's inclusion in *Children of the Sun*, a group exhibition presented by Art Melanated and hosted at Sotheby's. From that exhibition, four works by the artist were placed into institutional collections, marking a pivotal moment in the development of his career.

Presented here as a SAVAGE alum, West's inclusion underscores the program's commitment to sustained artist support and long-term growth. His work offers a clear example of what can emerge when discovery is met with intentional curation, continued advocacy, and meaningful opportunity.

KEVIN WEST**Brothers Keeper, 2025**

Oil on Canvas

40 x 30 in | 101.6 x 76.2 cm

\$7,500**Daughter of the Diaspora, 2025**

Oil on Canvas

40 x 30 in | 101.6 x 76.2 cm

\$7,500**Noir, 2025**

Oil on Canvas

36 x 36 in | 91.44 x 91.44 cm

\$7,500[INQUIRE](#)

CONTACT

For more information inquiries please contact:

SOL APONTE
CEO, Art Melanated

310-943-3561-O
sol@artmelanated.com

Availability is subject to change without notice.