

art | Melanated

PRESENTS

# SAVAGE

THE FUTURE IS OURS

EXHIBITION CATALOG



Band of Vices

FEB 14 - MAR 14, 2026

# SAVAGE

2026

THE FUTURE IS OURS

art | Melanated

# 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.

art | Melanated

## 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.

art | Melanated

MEET THE 2026

**SAVAGE**

**FINALISTS**

art | Melanated

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**



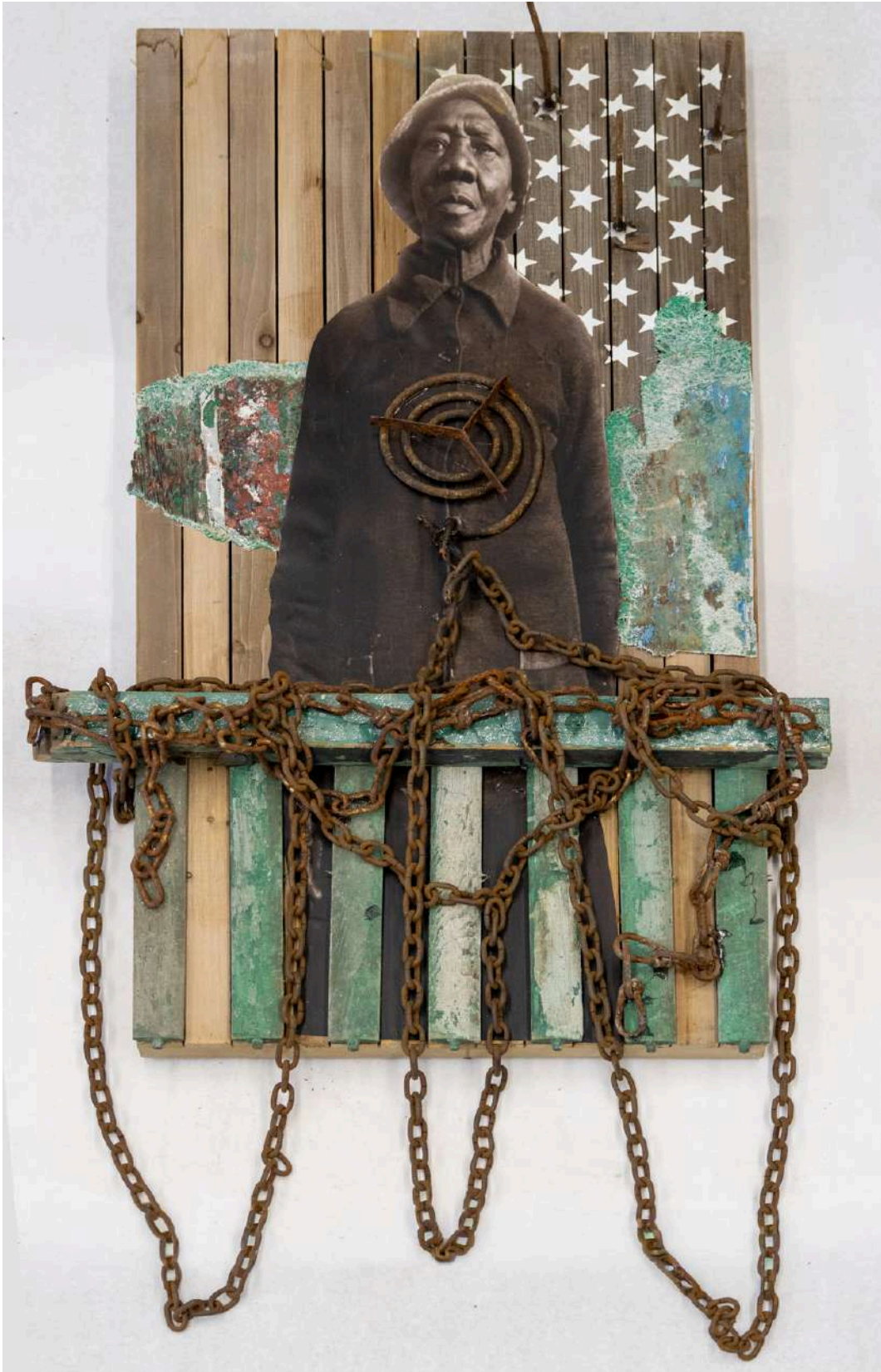
**The Breath Between Two, 2025**

(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

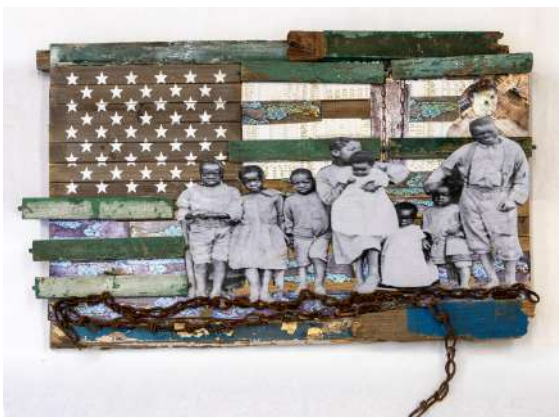
~~\$8,000~~ - SOLD



## 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

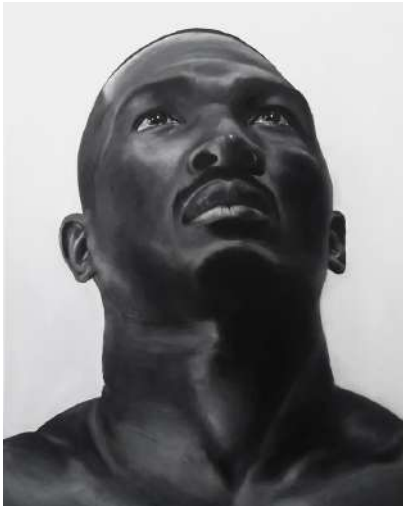


## **We Were Promised More Than This, 2025**

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**

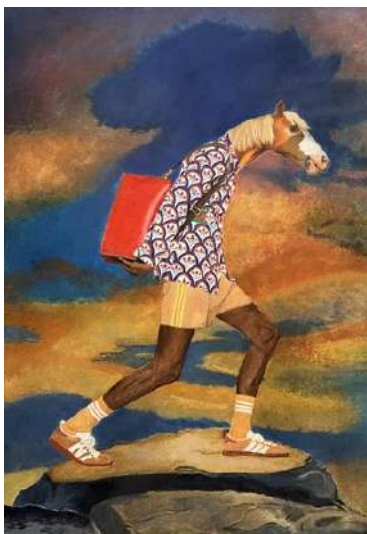


## **Untitled, 2025**

Soft Pastel on Paper

56 x 43 in | 142.24 x 109.22 cm

**\$6,000 - SOLD**

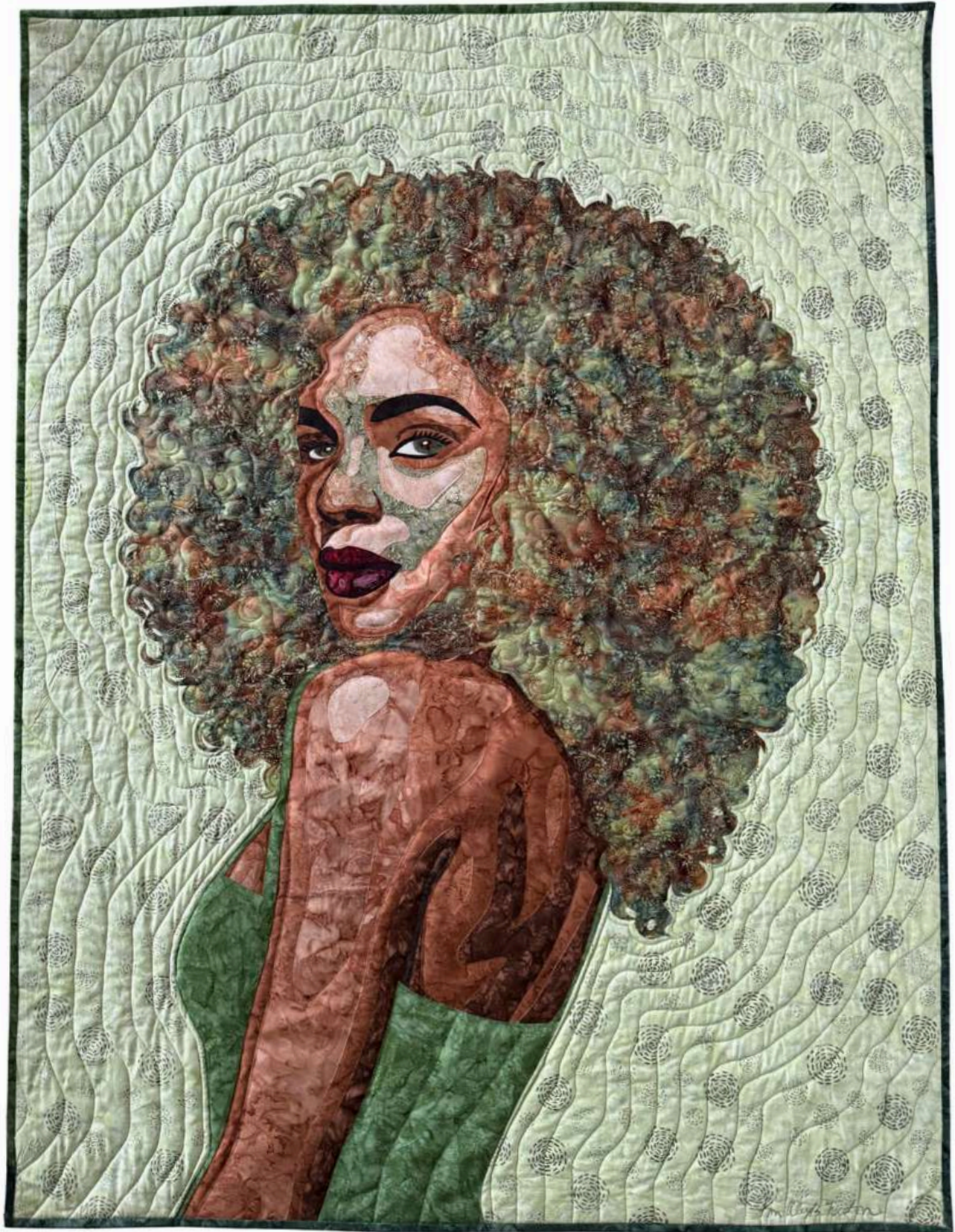


## **The Equestrian, 2025**

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 - ON HOLD**



## **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**



## **She is Evergreen, 2025**

Mixed Textile, 100% Cotton Indonesian Batik and Cotton Batting, Quilted  
54 x 44 in | 137.16 x 111.76 cm

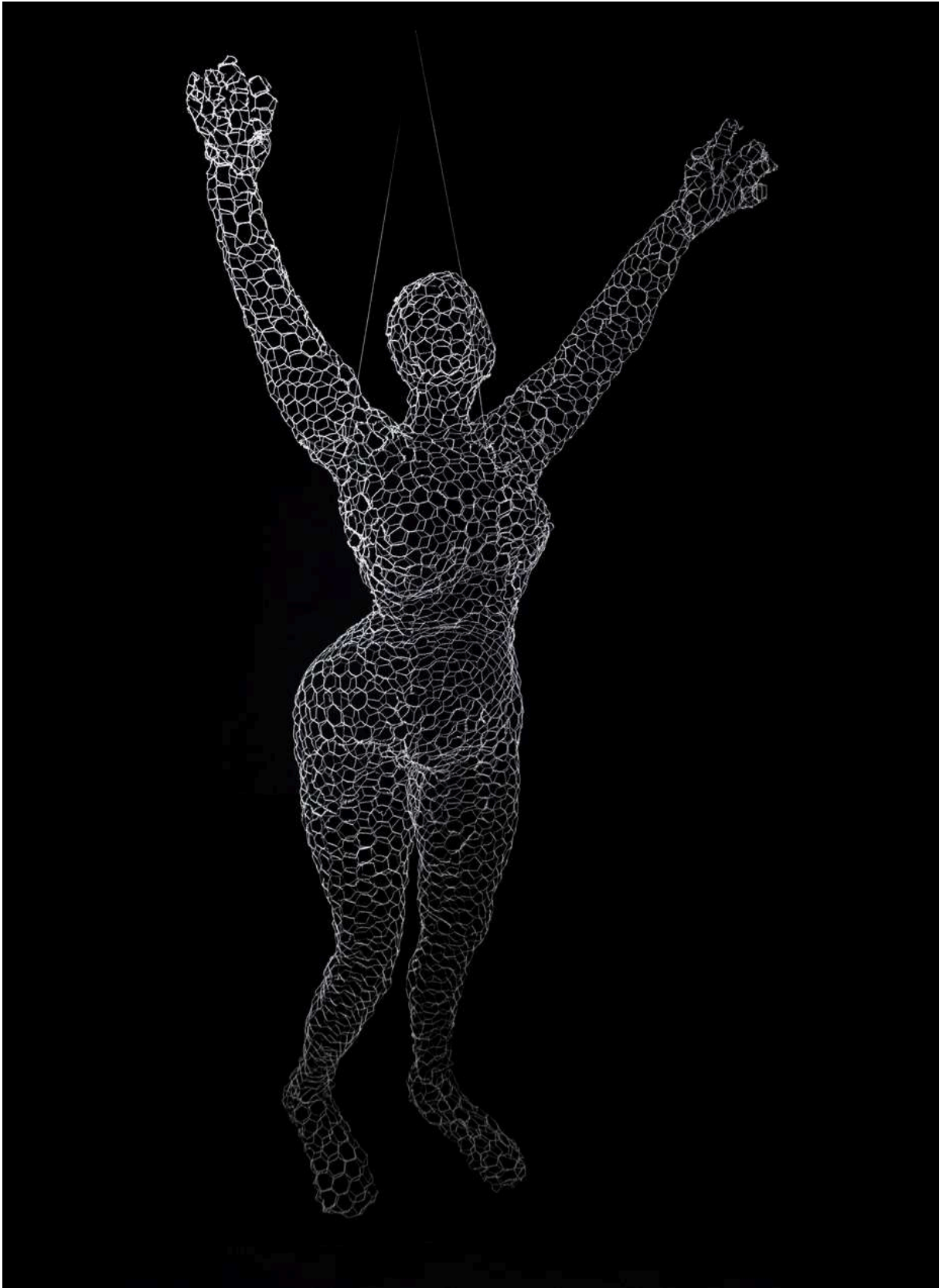
**\$8,000**



## **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

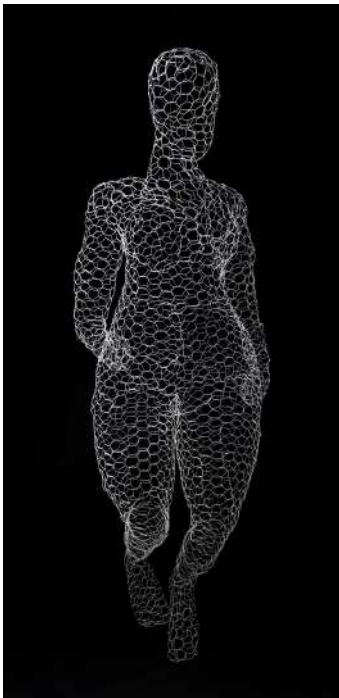


## **My Black is Beautiful While Worshipping, 2025**

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.