

i·de·al·is·tic /īdē(ə)'listik/

Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola
Sean Desiree
Marcus Leslie Singleton

curated by
Michael Mosby



University Art Museum, University at Albany

January 20 – April 3, 2021

i.de.al.is.tic brings together the work of artists **Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola**, **Sean Desiree**, and **Marcus Leslie Singleton**. The exhibition explores each artist's relationship to the concept of idealism—the unrealistic aim for perfection.

In each of these artist's practices there is an acceptance of imperfection, and through this resolve a true picture of a complex Black narrative emerges.

Singleton deals with the everyday, while Akinbola abstracts the concept of a Black identity, and Desiree objectively describes the inherent beauty in public housing units.



Michael Mosby, Curator

“We all yearn for perfection. Perhaps this desire is spawn from the failures of our day to day. We seek refuge from this desire in people, places, and things. However only in art is there a symbiosis between the idealistic and its shadow.”

-Michael Mosby on ***i.de.al.is.tic***

Michael Mosby (b.1987, Bronx, New York) lives and works in Hudson, New York. He is a multidisciplinary performer and DJ professionally known as FULATHELA. He has performed both in the United States and abroad, most notably at AFROPUNK Paris in Paris, France. Mosby is the co-founder of Free Range, a performance series that has been presented at Art Omi, Ghent, New York (2019) and The Halfmoon, Hudson, New York (2019).

Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola



As a first-generation Nigerian American, **Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola** works to reconcile the three cultures that make up his identity: “The African,” “The American,” and “The Negro.” Using culturally significant objects such as durags, Torino brushes, and palm oil, Akinbola explores how stereotypical notions of race, identity, and culture are embedded into current society. He seeks to mitigate the divide between Africa and Black America by combining multiple identities from both worlds in search of a truer meaning of self.



Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola
Camouflage #002 (BBC), 2017
Durags, acrylic on wood panel
102 ½ x 240 x 2 inches
Courtesy of the artist and HAUSEN

Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola
Camouflage #031 (Blood), 2020
Durags, acrylic on wood panel
96 x 96 x 1 ¼ inches
Courtesy of the artist



"I feel like when I'm truly creating in my studio, I feel possessed. The feeling reminds me of when I was a young child, at times so deep in play that the make-believe I imagined was basically the real thing when fully entranced. I feel like my practice provides an escape similar to that of a sandbox, where I can be left to my own devices, to play and do whatever the hell I want."

- Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola



Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola
Chopped and Screwed #01, 2019
Ibeji, wave brush, screws
14 x 7 x 4 ½ inches
Courtesy of the Artist



Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola
Chopped and Screwed #02, 2019
Ibeji, wave brush, screws
15 x 6 ½ x 2 inches
Courtesy of the artist

"...Sometimes I have to be in a certain mood to feel like I'm actually going to get a worthwhile experience out of being in my studio. There's times I go into the studio thinking I'm going to look at paintings and write emails and then when the music gets going it all goes out the window. I love it!"

- Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola



Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola
Camouflage #058 (Garvey), 2019
Durags, cardboard, acrylic on wood panel
54 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 48 x 3 inches
Courtesy of the artist

"I hope they leave excited and inspired to play in their own 'sandbox.'"

- Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola on what he hopes the viewer takes away from his work.

Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola
Camouflage #56 (Metropolis), 2018
Durags, acrylic on wood panel
96 x 96 x 2 inches
Courtesy of the artist







Sean Desiree

Using found wood from pallets, demolished buildings, and discarded scraps, **Sean Desiree** creates geometric works guided by a commitment to highlight stories of resistance. Desiree's two-dimensional works depict aerial views of public housing units in Upstate, New York. Through the use of intricate wood inlay and patterning, Desiree celebrates the beauty, resilience, and complexities comprising each unit. The proceeds from the sale of these works fund grants for local artists and makers residing in Upstate public housing.



Sean Desiree
Franklin, 2019
Sapele, spalted maple, mahogany, ebony, pine, oak
25 ½ x 33 ¼ x 1 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Sean Desiree
Providence Hall, Hudson, NY, 2019
Sapele, spalted maple, mahogany, ebony, pine, soft maple,
cedar, zebra wood
25 x 34 1/4 x 5/8 inches
Courtesy of the artist

"Once Covid hit, access to the shared makerspace I used as a studio was abruptly taken away. The loss of a space to create my work immediately took a toll on my mental health. Luckily, due to receiving a grant from the Radical Relief Fund, I was able to purchase a few tools to set up a woodshop at home. Having the resources to continue my work was and is everything I need in order to survive and thrive."

- Sean Desiree

Sean Desiree
Taylor Houses, Troy, NY, 2019
Sapele, spalted maple, soft maple, mahogany, ebony, pine, oak,
cedar
25 ¼ x 33 x 1 inches
Courtesy of the artist



"Fortunately my ability to create is not impeded by my mood. I connect my practice more closely to a routine such as exercise, versus a practice that is solely expressive. Most of my work relies heavily on the use of my body. I need it to feel whole at the end of the day. When I am away from it, I struggle to feel meaningful and productive. It also helps that my work consists of various forms of woodworking and music production. Having several mediums to choose from keeps the creative flow going."

- Sean Desiree



Sean Desiree
Greenwood Manor, Hudson, NY, 2019
African, padauk, spalted maple, mahogany, ebony, pine, oak, cedar
25 ½ x 33 ¾ x ¼ inches
Courtesy of the artist



Sean Desiree
Crosswinds at Hudson, 2019
Pine, mahogany, spalted maple, ebony, zebra wood,
oak, unknown varieties
25 1/8 x 36 1/8 inches x 5/8 inches
Courtesy of the artist

"With this series my hope is to convey the beauty of each public housing unit depicted and ultimately the beauty of each person living there. It's to combat words like "ghetto," "sketchy," and "dodgy" that are used to describe poor black neighborhoods, and to show our humanity. I grew up in public housing in the Bronx and I've lived with and experienced the stigma and false perceptions of people that have a peripheral view of it. In my childhood when I only had my own self-perception to go by, I felt joy, a sense of community, and proud of where I came from."

- Sean Desiree



Sean Desiree
Marble Hill, 2020
Maple, mahogany, ebony, spalted maple,
sapele, and brass strips
23 x 35 x 1 inches
Courtesy of the artist



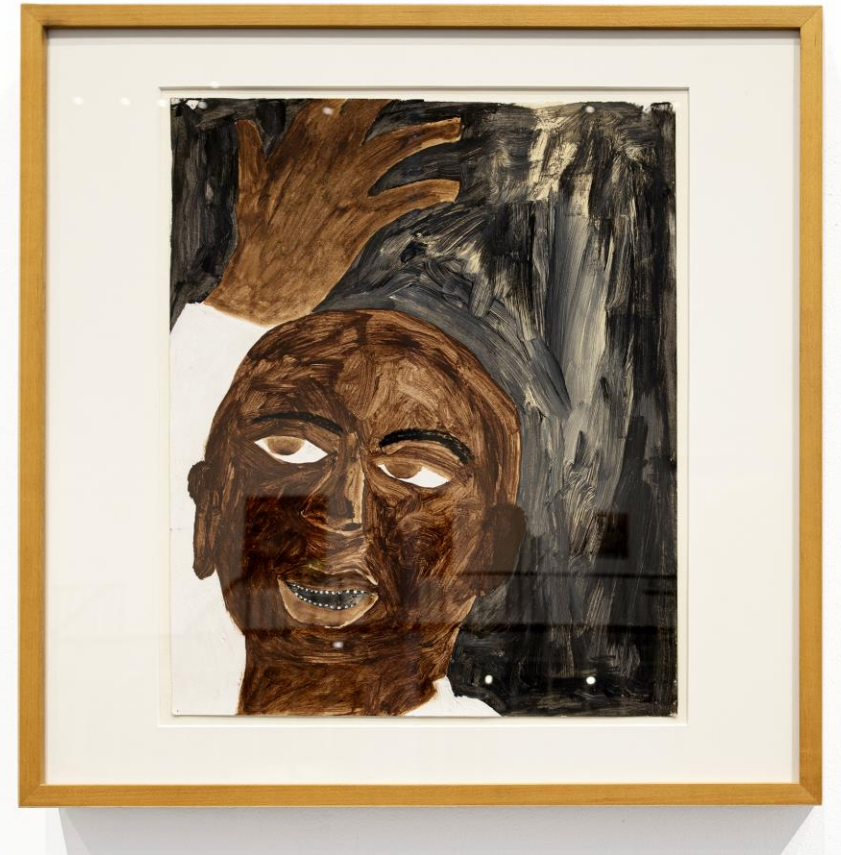
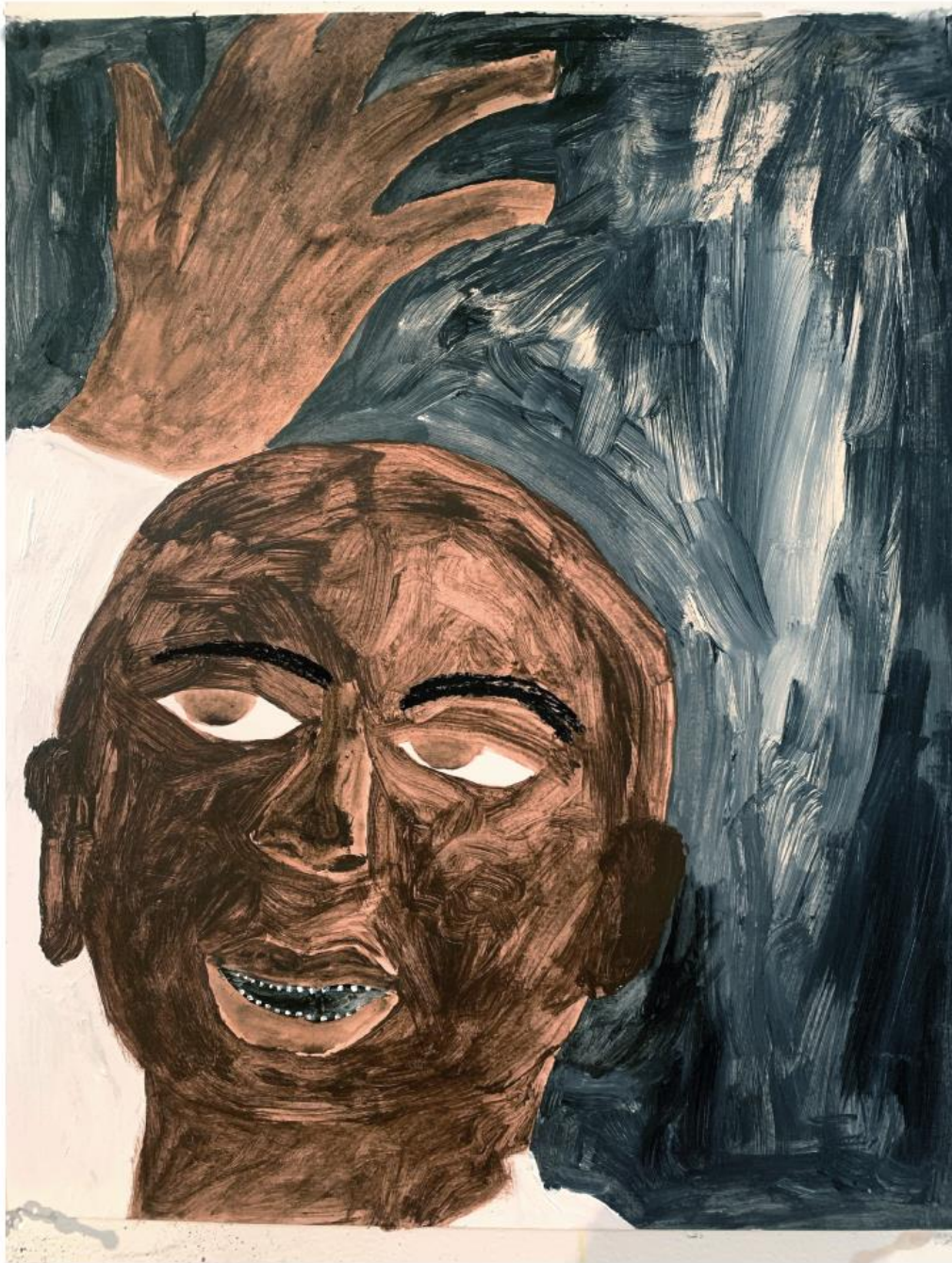
Marcus Leslie Singleton



Marcus Leslie Singleton's paintings reflect reality, depicting moments of the strange world we are currently experiencing, making them atemporal. His goal is not to make these moments outlast time, but rather to be honest about the thoughts and experiences within each moment. Filtered through his own personal experiences, he reacts honestly to the current world, asking questions, analyzing people's actions and motivations. He seeks to expand on what this time means to people, to encourage introspection on who we all are, and what each of us believe.



Marcus Leslie Singleton
Praise Team Been Goin For 2 hrs, 2020
Acrylic and cut outs on paper
17 x 14 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Marcus Leslie Singleton
Man Singing His Praises, 2020
Acrylic on paper
17 x 14 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Marcus Leslie Singleton
The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, 2020
Acrylic on wood panel
12 x 12 inches
Courtesy of the Artist

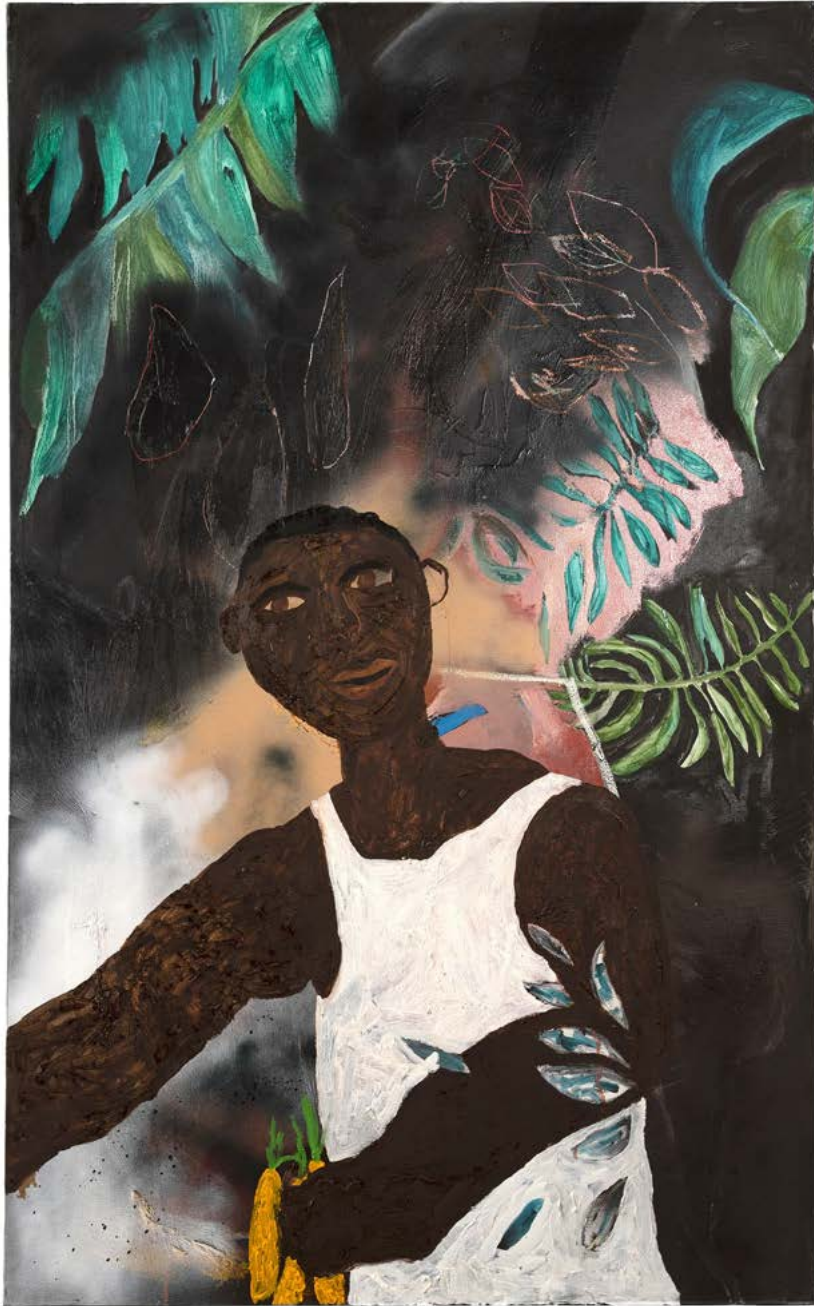
Marcus Leslie Singleton
Man Receiving Holy Spirit, 2019
Oil on canvas
10 x 8 inches
Courtesy of the artist



"Art has saved me a number of times. It's when there is chaos, being in the studio is a type of sanctuary. I'm able to quiet down, zone in, and be present with whatever I'm working on at the time.

It's not only Covid, but during this pandemic my life has taken a number of turns. I think this has tethered my relationship with my work and life in a way where there really isn't any difference. There was a point, recently, I was trying to callous my dark moments. Now I'm trying to dance them out on the canvases. It's become therapeutic for me."

- Marcus Leslie Singleton



Marcus Leslie Singleton
Night Gardener, 2019
Oil and spray paint on canvas
48 x 30 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Marcus Leslie Singleton
Beach Goers, 2019
Oil paint and spray paint on canvas
48 x 36 inches
Courtesy of the artist

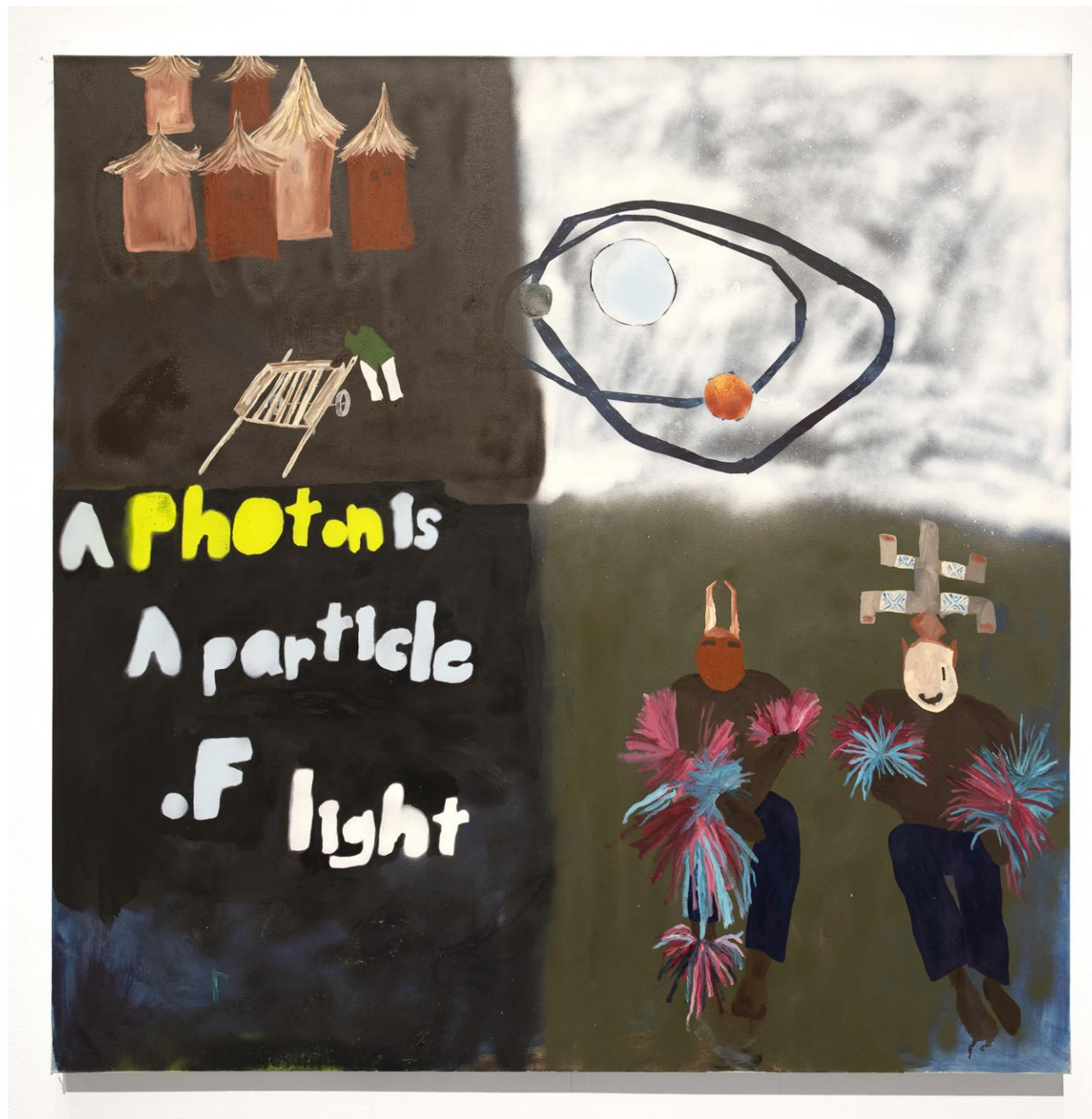
"I think I need to be focused on what I'm doing. Sometimes I'm all over the place and I can still get work done. But I think I'm at my most productive and creative when I approach my work in an organized way."

- Marcus Leslie Singleton

Marcus Leslie Singleton
Punic, 2019
Oil paint and spray paint on canvas
48 x 36 inches
Courtesy of the artist



Marcus Leslie Singleton
Love Letter to the Dogon, 2020
Oil paint and spray paint on canvas
48 x 48 inches
Courtesy of the artist





Marcus Leslie Singleton
Love Letter to the Dogon II, 2020
Oil and spray paint on canvas
36 x 48 inches
Courtesy of the artist

"My hope is to communicate a feeling or thought through the work. Something that people can relate to, and something that people can connect with and create dialog around. I want to offer work that can heal and resonate."

- Marcus Leslie Singleton

Marcus Leslie Singleton
Guard at the Guggenheim, 2019
Oil on canvas
36 x 24 inches
Courtesy of the artist



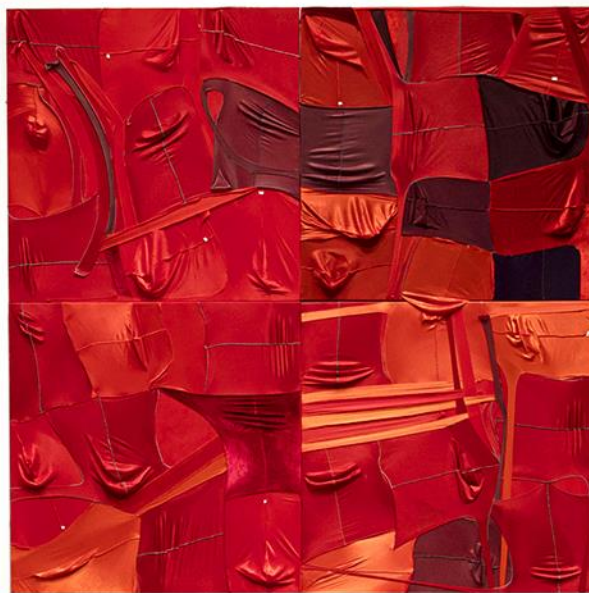


Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola (b. 1991, Columbia, Missouri) lives and works in Queens, New York. Solo exhibitions include John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, Wisconsin (2021); FALSE FLAG, New York, New York (2021); Museum of Art and Design, New York, New York (2020); Slag Gallery, New York, New York (2020); and Queens Museum, Queens, New York (2018). He has also participated in group exhibitions at Zukerman Museum of Art, KSU College of the Arts, Marietta, Georgia (2020) and Denny Dimin Gallery, New York, New York (2019). Akinbola was selected for the Anderson Ranch Art Center Residency in 2017, was awarded the Van Lier Fellowship in 2019, and was an artist-in-residence at Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna, Austria in 2021. Akinbola is a first-generation American, raised between Missouri and Nigeria. He received a bachelor's degree in communications and media at SUNY Purchase in 2016.

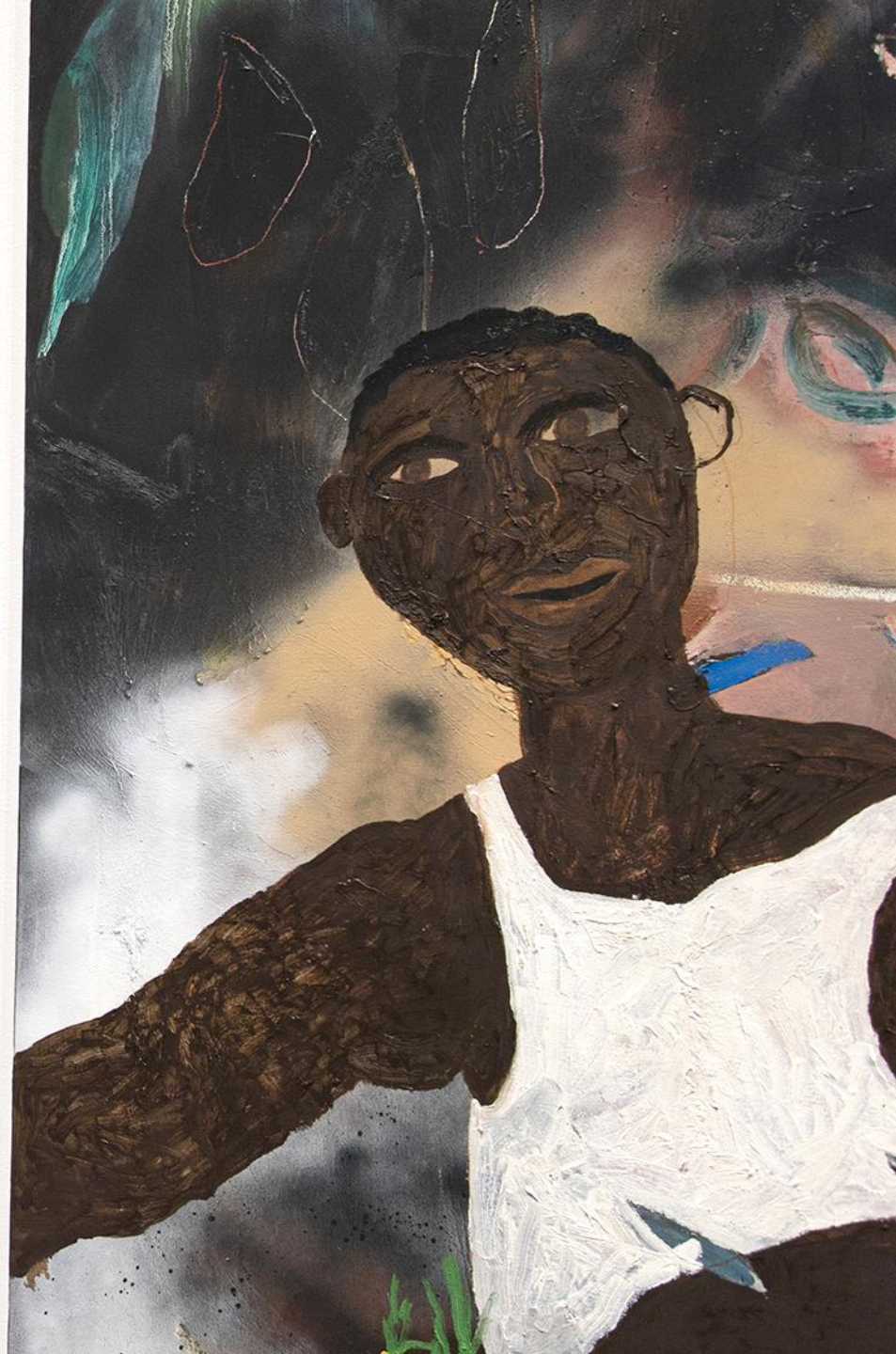
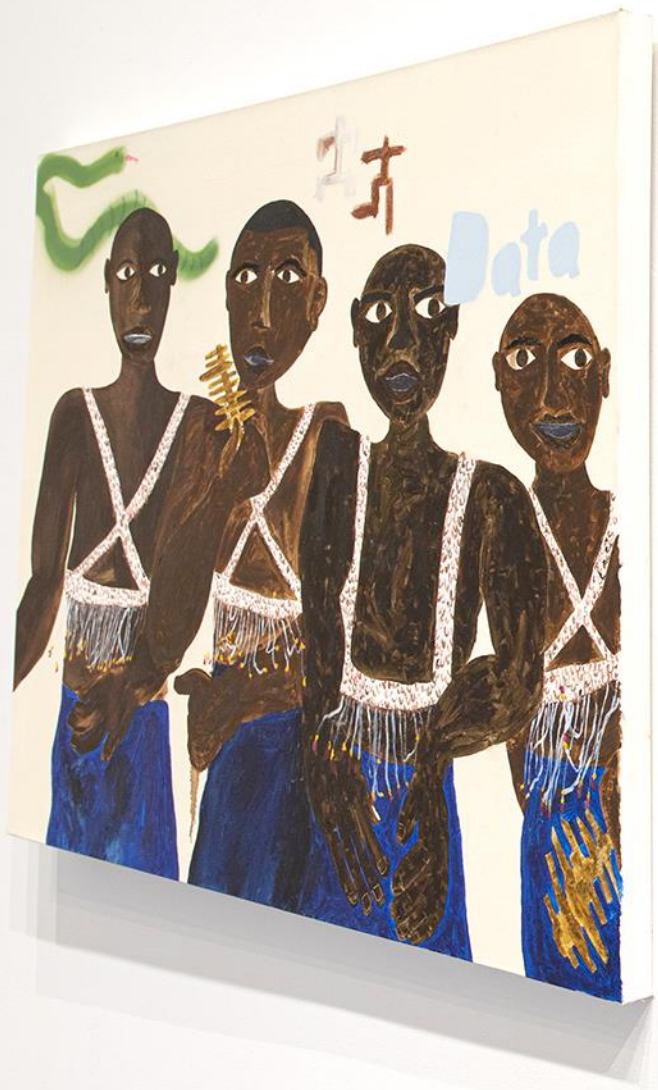
Sean Desiree (b. 1983, Bronx, New York) lives and works in Albany, New York. Solo and group exhibitions include *LIFTED: Public Housing, An Aerial Perspective*, MINNA, Hudson, New York (2019); Group Exhibition, D'Arcy Simpson Art Works, Hudson, New York (2019); *Oral History of Female Drummers*, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York (2016); *A Piece of the Dream*, The Albany Barn, Albany, New York (2015); and *Pop-Place*, Capitalize Albany Corporation, Albany, New York (2015). They are currently a 2020–21 Engaging Artists Fellow at More Art, New York, New York. In addition to being a visual artist they are also a solo musician performing as bell's roar. In 2018, they produced the ART FUNDS ART TOUR, a seven-city concert series that ran from Albany, New York to Atlanta, Georgia.

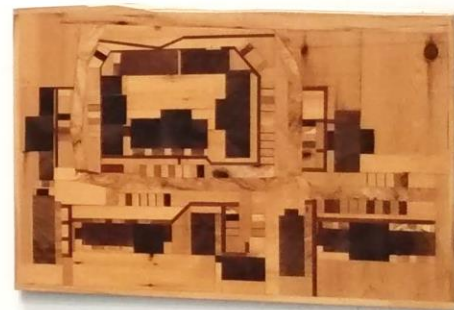
Marcus Leslie Singleton (b. 1990, Seattle, Washington) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Solo exhibitions include Steve Turner Gallery, Los Angeles, California (2020); The Journal Gallery, New York, New York (2020); TURN Gallery, New York, New York (2019); and Medium Tings, Brooklyn, New York (2018). Singleton's work has been included in exhibitions at Frieze Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California (2020) and SPRING/BREAK Art Show, New York, New York (2020).





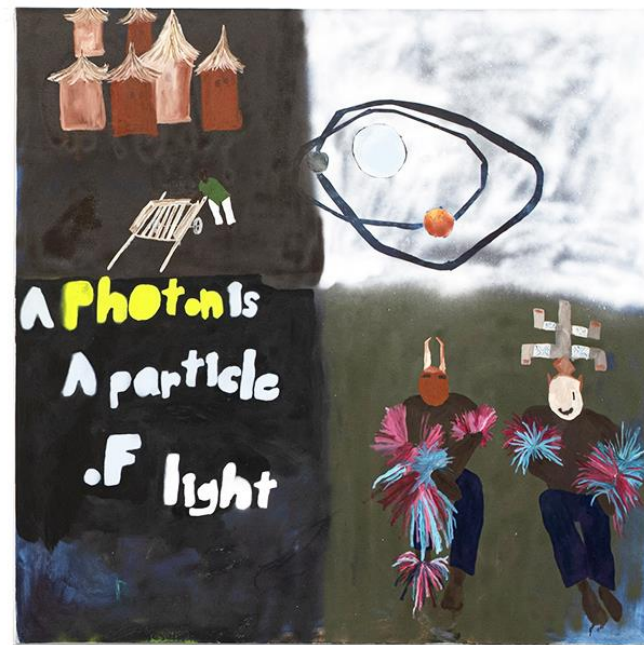








Model of a traditional East Asian building complex, featuring a central circular courtyard, multiple rooms, and a large gate structure.



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