

moniquemeloche

451 N Paulina Street, Chicago 60622
312 243 2129 moniquemeloche.com

EBONY G. PATTERSON

she is land ...

she is soil...

she is home...

she is nourishment...

she is time...

she is the wailing...

she is the memory ...

she is the mourning...

April 24 – June 12, 2021

moniquemeloche gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new large-scale tapestries and hand-cut paper works by Ebony G. Patterson. This is her fifth solo show with the gallery.

Emerging from the framework of her immersive post-colonial garden-like installations, Patterson's recent practice further considers the rich, expansive possibilities of the garden – a space for life and death, a complex entanglement of race, gender, class, and violence.

Opulently embellished with a myriad of materials such as glitter, beading, and varied textiles, these new works hold images of figures in graceful sorrow, utilizing gestures of mourning as a lens through which to consider the measurement of women, vehicles weighted with the obligation not just to care for those lives that have been lost, but to demonstrate and lead others in the act of lamentation. The female form constitutes the site for life, nourishment, first love and joy, while also the impulse for grieving. Each form bravely assumes a posture of distress, the onerous emotional and physical labor required to conduct acts of devotion, the soul care that grants permission to confront historic and inherited traumas.

These complex gardens offer a space for beauty, burial, transformation, and conservation. There is a ubiquitous and undeniable heaviness in the materiality, the cumbersome burden bestowed on those who mourn echoes throughout the furrows of patterning and adornment. Figures are hauntingly woven into the landscapes, disappearing within the lush flora of each tangled tableau. Their headless torsos, decorated in luxurious and glistening wares, are positioned in various gestures of anguish. Disembodied limbs assume their own forms of silhouetted expression throughout the landscape; while those seldom few that remain animate evoke a suggestion of skin, of a life prior, a reminder of the violence inflicted upon the invisible, eternally reverberating through those figures who are left behind to grieve. Large embellished sculpted vultures gaze keenly from the floor upon the mourning figures on the wall. While rapacious in nature, there is much more to their scavenge; they're integral forces within the greater stratification, they're cleaners who tend to the remnants of physical form, an act of collective survival that honors the lost and cultivates the land.

Elaborate and beguiling, these works put forth an environment of ominous beauty and pervasive decay. They are spaces in which life and death coexist, where traumas are exposed and healed through the grace of the solemn mourners.

The gallery is excited to introduce **Layo Bright** (b. 1991, Lagos, Nigeria) who will present a series of new ceramic and pottery plaster portrait works in the gallery's viewing room. A multidisciplinary artist whose practice explores the migrant experience throughout the African diaspora, Bright's sculptures present visual compositions that address themes of culture, identity, family, and collective West African histories. Each distinctive work is cast from her own face, as well as her mother's face, dipped in gold pigment and adorned with gele fabric which she carefully fastens in the style of a headwrap and Ghana-Must-Go bags sculpted into leaves. Together, Patterson and Bright operate in the figurative realm, using novel material interventions as a means to challenge notions of representation, visibility, and perception, arriving at new avenues for reflection regarding the formation and influence of legacy.

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