

moniquemeloche

451 N Paulina Street, Chicago 60622
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Collage Culture

June 7–July 27, 2024

Opening Reception: Friday, June 7, 4-7pm

moniquemeloche is pleased to present *Collage Culture*, a group exhibition that delves into the multifaceted realm of collage as a hybrid process, presenting a selection of artists whose practices traverse diverse visual languages. The works on view contribute to a rich tapestry of hybridity, weaving together narratives of personal histories, cultural identities, and societal critiques. Like the title suggests, *Collage Culture* embodies the myriad ways the artists incorporate process and material to explore the transformative power of collage and boundless possibilities it offers in reimagining the complexities of contemporary existence.

Sanford Biggers' (b.1970, Los Angeles, CA) work is an interplay of narrative, perspective and history that speaks to current social, political, and economic happenings, while also examining the contexts that bore them. Working with antique quilts that echo rumors of their use as signposts on the Underground Railroad, he deconstructs the quilts and rebuilds them into 2D quilt constructions referencing urban culture, the body, sacred geometry, and American symbolism.

Antonius-Tín Bui's (b.1992, Bronx, NY) work traverses the realms of hand-cut paper, community engagement, performance, and soft sculpture to visualize hybrid identities or histories that confront the unsettling present. Bui's hybridized identity as a queer, genderfluid, and Vietnamese American informs the way they employ beauty as a refuge for fellow marginalized communities. Their collages blend ancestral burning paper, vintage porn magazines, marbled paper, and gold leaf, exploring the intersections of spirituality and sexuality.

Genevieve Gaignard (b.1981, Orange, MA) uses self-portraiture, collage, sculpture, and installation to investigate personal histories, popular culture, and racial currents through her lens as a biracial woman navigating unsettling American realities. Her collage works incorporate vintage wallpaper and photography with xeroxed historical news media, magazine clippings, and portraiture to create visual renderings that affirm Black livelihood, provoking reflections on the often-hostile realities of the outside world.

Kathia St. Hilaire's (b.1995, Palm Beach, FL) distinctive technique combines printmaking, painting, collage, and weaving. Informed by her experience growing up in Caribbean and African American neighborhoods in South Florida, her work draws inspiration from Haitian Vodun flags, which are used to tell the country's history and honor ancestral spirits. Using nontraditional materials such as beauty products, industrial metal, fabric or tires, she creates ornate tapestries that seek to preserve Haitian history.

Sheree Hovsepien (b.1974, Isfahan, Iran) foregrounding the materiality of photography in a digital age, Hovsepien works with film-based cameras, light-sensitive paper, various objects, and her own body to produce cerebral and sensual photographs in which she

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deconstructs her medium. Her assemblage works incorporate found materials from her studio arranged into constellations that hover above a photographic ground. Operating as an object and an archive, Hovsepian's works mimic the photograph's physical and temporal duality.

Yashua Klos' (b.1977, Chicago, IL) practice maintains a nuanced, and at times deeply personal, engagement with themes of identity, the human form, and the built environment. His collages, portraiture, and sculptures reflect strategies of fragmentation and adaptation, and their influence upon ideas of Blackness and Black existence, employing a unique reinterpretation of traditional methods of woodblock printing from a vast collection of textures and imagery.

Helina Metaferia's (b.1983 Washington, D.C.) diverse process incorporates collage, assemblage, video, performance, and social engagement. Her work integrates archives, somatic studies, and dialogical practices, supporting often overlooked narratives that amplify BIPOC/femme bodies. Through collage, Metaferia literally weaves together women of color across time to create an intergenerational exchange of care and activist labor.

Lavar Munroe (b.1982, Nassau, Bahamas) is an interdisciplinary artist working primarily in mixed media and painting, often incorporating sentimental objects collected and gifted from his family and objects found during his travels. His work examines themes present in folklore, fables, and historic films—drawing comparison between his upbringing in the Bahamas and travels to various countries in Africa.

Ebony G. Patterson's (b.1981, Kingston, Jamaica) expansive practice addresses visibility and invisibility through explorations of class, race, gender, youth culture, pageantry, and acts of violence in the context of "postcolonial" spaces. Working across multiple media including tapestry, photography, video, sculpture, drawing, and installation, each work is intricately embellished and densely layered in order to draw the viewer closer and to question how we engage in the act of looking.

Monika Plioplyte (b.1989, Kaunas, Lithuania) weaves printed and cut paper, photographs, and other materials into narrative structures that connect Baltic folklore, gender identity, and her Lithuanian immigrant experience. In work that combines printmaking, sculpture, performance, and photography, Plioplyte often uses her body as subject or object. Her storytelling is animated by Baltic Pagan symbolism, female archetypes, personal rituals, and the uncanny.

David Shrobe (b.1974, New York, NY) creates multi-layered portraits and assemblage paintings made in part from everyday materials that he finds in multiple geographies. He disassembles furniture, especially from his familial home in Harlem, separating wood from fabric and recombines them as supports for collage, painting, and drawing. Through these various modes of production, his work brings notions of identity, history, and memory into question while challenging conventions of classical portraiture.

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Nyugen E. Smith's (b.1976, Jersey City, NJ) practice revolves around the construction of narrative through the prism of Black cultural identity, responding to the legacy of European colonial rule in African history. His sculptural collages bundle various found materials together representing found-object shelters, bringing an intentional artistic voice and awareness to the trauma, resilience, spirit, violence, and memory of both ancestral and living people in the Black African diaspora.

Shinique Smith (b.1971, Baltimore, MD) is known for her striking creations of fabric, calligraphy, and collage which contain vibrant and carefully collected mementos from her life. Inspired by the vast nature of the things that we as a culture create, consume, and discard, her works operate at the convergence of consumption and spiritual sanctuary, balancing forces and revealing connections across space, time, race, gender, and place to suggest the possibility of new worlds.

Wendy Red Star (b.1981, Billings, MT) is an enrolled member of the Apsáalooke (Crow) Tribe who works across disciplines to explore the intersections of Native American ideologies and colonialist structures, both historically and in contemporary society. Drawing on pop culture, conceptual art strategies, and the Crow traditions within which she was raised, Red Star pushes the conversation surrounding Native American perspectives in new directions.

Mickalene Thomas' (b.1971, Camden, NJ) portraits critically deconstruct accepted definitions of beauty, race, and gender, specifically in relation to Black women. Her mixed media photo collages, often rhinestone-encrusted, incorporate aesthetics of Western painting and the heavily sexualized blaxploitation films of the 1970s to addresses issues of femininity, race, and beauty alongside personal histories and childhood memories.

Related Programming

Collage Culture Panel Discussion

Saturday, June 8

1pm

Join us for a panel discussion with *Collage Culture* artists, offering insights into the diverse techniques and creative processes that they employ in their work. Moderated by Lisa Wainwright, Rauschenberg scholar and art historian at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, who is also writing a scholarly essay for the publication of this exhibition.