

When the Mountains dance with the Ocean

Caroline Absher, Lindsay Adams, Kevin Brisco, Elizabet Cerviño, Æmen Ededéen, Adebunmi Gbadebo, Jerrell Gibbs, Basil Kincaid, Naomi Lisiki, Luis López-Chávez, Shaina McCoy, Cinthia Sifa Mulanga, Jonny Niesche, a'driane nieves, Deborah Roberts, Tajh Rust, Marcus Leslie Singleton, Brittney Leanne Williams, Lulama Wolf

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Bode is pleased to present *When the Mountains Dance with the Ocean*, a group exhibition with works by Caroline Absher, Lindsay Adams, Kevin Brisco, Elizabet Cerviño, Adebunmi Gbadebo, Jerrell Gibbs, Alteronce Gumby, Basil Kincaid, Naomi Lisiki, Luis López-Chávez, Shaina McCoy, Cinthia Sifa Mulanga, Jonny Niesche, a'driane nieves, Deborah Roberts, Tajh Rust, Marcus Leslie Singleton, Brittney Leanne Williams, Lulama Wolf.

Perched between the Atlantic and Indian oceans stretching into infinity and the table mountain rising like a silent sentinel watching over the land, there is a house in Cape Town. Large windows open up onto the sea, framing a vast horizon, subtly playing with the boundaries of interior and exterior, of home and nature. A salty breeze blows through them, mixing with the smell of freshly cooked food and the taste of good company and the sound of the house gently coming alive with a hum of voices and laughter accentuated by the clinking of glasses and cutlery. Around a long table, stories about creativity, purpose and passion are being told, conversations about art and art-making and about life itself arise; ideas, thoughts, and memories float through the rooms like the tide below. They manifest themselves in works of art, find shape in color and texture, leaving their mark on the canvas.

When the Mountains Dance with the Ocean opens up and invites into a place just like that one. A place of longing and belonging, much like Cape Town itself is one. Though not quite through a gathering of that kind, the feeling remains, that each piece of art was shaped by those very exchanges. A feeling, as though the walls themselves had absorbed the creative spirit of the gatherings they now inspire and which Bode is more than excited to be inviting to. In an extensive group show displayed through the entire house, the sterile white cube surrounding is replaced by a welcoming and warm, open and yet intimate atmosphere. The selection of works by Caroline Absher, Lindsay Adams, Kevin Brisco, Elizabet Cerviño, Æmen Ededéen, Adebunmi Gbadebo, Jerrell Gibbs, Alteronce Gumby, Basil Kincaid, Naomi Lisiki, Luis López-Chávez, Shaina McCoy, Cinthia Sifa Mulanga, Jonny Niesche, a'driane nieves, Deborah Roberts, Tajh Rust, Marcus Leslie Singleton, Brittney Leanne Williams, and Lulama Wolf brings together artists and practices from all over the world, subtly highlighting nuances that unite their work despite the geographic distances not only visually, but even more so in their matters of subjects, narratives, or motifs.

Within these uniting elements four main currents can be identified, forming the foundation of the exhibition, allowing undercurrents to connect and intertwine the single works into one choir of artistic voices. Tuning into a visual concert about the exploration of race, identity and culture, about the examination of personal and collective histories, about the blurring and pushing of boundaries between abstract and figurative formal language and about the intersectionality of material, gesture, language and painting.

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In this house, art isn't confined; it thrives in the warmth of a lived-in space. The long dining table becomes a place where not only meals are shared but also thoughts, ideas, and perspectives. You are invited to sit down, enjoy a dinner or a glass of wine, and join the ongoing conversation about life and creativity. Here, art mingles with everyday moments, and visitors become part of a continuous dialogue—one that lingers in the air like the scent of the ocean breeze.

About the artists

Caroline Absher, b. 1994 in Greenville, South Carolina, lives and works in New York, USA

Caroline Absher's oil paintings move between figuration and abstraction, including self portraits as well as imagery of friends and family. In her widespread color palette, objects, people and bodies can dissolve into abstract forms just as much as abstract forms can take on figurative qualities. This redefining of stylistic boundaries is a result of her intuitive practice where swift movements follow rapid decisions.

Absher holds a BFA in painting from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn New York

Lindsay Adams, b. 1990 in Washington, D.C

Lindsay Adams is a writer and painter systematically engaging in her work with critical analysis and a perceptive understanding of the complex fabric of social dynamics. Embracing her intersectional identity, Lindsay's work serves as both a reflection and extension of self, reflecting on personal and collective histories and memories, while simultaneously mining through the complexity of the black experience. Rendering layers of texture and color, alternating between abstracted and defined forms, she composes multiple paintings within one, examining themes of place, liberation, memory, and psychological space.

Adams received her B.A. in International Studies: World Politics and Diplomacy and Latin and Iberian Studies from The University of Richmond.

Kevin Brisco Jr, b. 2000 in Memphis, TN

Kevin Brisco Jr works across the media of painting, sculpture, installation, and performance. Issues of place and representation within the realms of imperialism and Western globalism form central points of interest in his work. He often allegorically depicts plants, analyzing how colonial history is still ever present in nature. What results is unapologetically beautiful and yet truthfully documented.

Brisco holds a BFA from Wesleyan University, Middletown, CT, US and a MFA from the School of Art, Yale University, New Haven, CT, US.

Æmen Ededéen, b. 1979 in Mountain Home, AFB, Idaho, lives and works in New Mexico.

Æmen Ededéen's (also known as Joshua Hagler) practice is based on self-directed research and extensive traveling. References range from Italian religious art to Max Beckmann, and in general German Expressionism and New Objectivity. What he is particularly interested in is a strong psychological and sociological vein, running through these artistic movements. Ranging from small scale to over-life size, Æmen Ededéen's paintings reside between the figurative and the abstract. By times clearly discernible, at others only a vague silhouette, the figure always reoccurs in the artist's work alluding to specific situations or subjects, or general topics such as memory or experience. Especially in his vast landscape paintings, the artist draws upon photographic sources which he abstracts and thereby reappropriates into a new visual language.

Ededéen holds a BFA from The University of Arizona.

Adebunmi Gbadebo, b. 1992 in Livingston, New Jersey, lives and works between Newark, NJ, and Philadelphia, PA

Adebunmi Gbadebo (Ah-dae-bu-mee Bha-dae-bo) is a multidisciplinary artist working with paper, ceramics, sound, and film, exploring the archival record of her family's ancestry in Nigeria and enslavement in America. Through her research, material selection, and technical process, the artist emphasizes the prejudice of the historical record, activating her practice to restore Black subjectivity.

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Gbadebo holds a BFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York and a Certification in Creative Place Keeping at The New Jersey Institute of Technology.

Jerrell Gibbs, b. 1988, Baltimore, MD, US

Jerrell Gibbs' figurative portraits depict the multilayered experience of the African American diaspora, making the ordinary extraordinary. Gibbs opposes deceptive perceptions of Black men by questioning known narratives and their connection to a muted visual history. Gibbs' paintings are acts of resistance, asserting power over visual stereotypes. He paints the Black male figure with adornments, such as flowers, and contextualizes them in moments of peace, rest, and solitude. These gestures function to dismantle the visual misrepresentation of violence, trauma, and pain.

Gibbs holds a MFA from the LeRoy E. Hoffberger School of Painting, Baltimore, MD.

Basil Kincaid, b. 1986, St. Louis, Missouri

Basil Kincaid honors and evolves traditional practices through quilting, collaging, photography, installation and performance. Implementing materials vested with emotional and memorial content, Kincaid allows these mediums to function as spiritual technology that forward various wisdoms born from Kincaid's greatest values: family, imagination, rest, and experience.

Kincaid studied drawing and painting at Colorado College, graduating in 2010.

Naomi Lisiki, b. 1997, Guadeloupe, French Caribbean, lives and works in Brooklyn, NY

Naomi Lisiki engages with different ways of creating, such as oil painting, sculpture, and writing. Dealing with themes of permutation and metamorphosis, her paintings, mostly abstract, apply densely packed marks in vaguely symmetrical patterns. Both expressive and repetitive, they are meant to be markers of time and of sensorial experiences. Constantly growing and changing, her paintings become self-referential objects of research and discovery.

Lisiki holds a BFA in Fine Arts from The Cooper Union and a MFA in Painting and Printmaking from the Yale School of Art.

Luis López-Chávez, b. 1988, Manzanillo, Cuba

Luis López-Chávez is a contemporary Cuban painter exploring the visual dimensions of sculptural form and logical space. Based on the frictions between geometrical forms of representation with the socio-historical context, he proposes a visuality contained between a conceptual methodology and an unconscious pulse, between arithmetical and philosophical image. His paintings address themes such as space, emptiness, and different notions of death. By repeating elementary forms, the artist emphasizes their fundamental value and, thus, their link to metaphysical concerns.

López-Chávez graduated from the Academia Profesional de Artes Plásticas in Manzanillo, Cuba and from the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana, Cuba.

Shaina McCoy, b. 1993, Minneapolis, MN, lives and work in Minneapolis, MN

Working with richly hued oil paints, McCoy creates selectively colored canvases that depict imagery drawn from photographs of family members and intimate moments. Finding a formal balance between artists such as Kara Walker and David Hockney, McCoy builds faceless figures from thick, tactile layers of glossy paint; resulting in vivid and vibrant anonymous portraits, loaded with sentiment and mystery. McCoy's work captures the ambiguous and familiar essence of memory, radiating with both history and wonder.

She graduated from Minneapolis Community and Technical College with an AA in Fine Art.

Cinthia SifaMulanga, b. 1997, Lubumbashi, CD, lives and works in Johannesburg, SA

Cinthia Sifa Mulanga is an independent contemporary artist from the Democratic Republic of the Congo whose practice is deeply rooted in her experiences growing up in South Africa. After her studies, Mulanga became preoccupied with painting and collage, mediums that have come to define her practice. They serve a dual interest in engaging with the history of western art and popular culture thus delving into African art. The focus of Mulanga's practice is on the representation of Black women. Through their depiction, she looks to engage with different personas, emotions, or states of mind.

Mulanga trained as an artist at the Artist Proof Studio in Johannesburg.

Jonny Niesche, b. 1972, Sydney, AU

Based on the visual frame of reference of the glam rock era and its cosmetics-driven counterculture, Niesche creates paintings, sculptures and installations that deal intensively with the perception of color, surface and spatiality. The works make use of a variety of techniques and materials. They are neither opaque nor transparent, seem to float and pulsate and transform from fixed images into dynamic events. In this way, Niesche experiments with the effects of interactivity and movement on perception and involves the viewer spatially and physically in the act of seeing.

Niesche holds a BFA and a MFA from University of Sydney.

a'driane nieves, b. 1982, Texas, US

a'driane nieves gives visible shape to the internal biological and emotional processes of adaptation, recovery, healing, and transformation. nieves' work allows her to carve out—and take up—space where the fullness of her humanity as a Black, queer, neurodivergent woman can be expressed without retribution. It is her hope that holding space in her work for expressing her fullest self encourages others to do the same. Influenced by Joan Mitchell, Cy Twombly, Bernice Bing, and early Black abstractionist painters ranging from Alma Thomas to Mary Lovelace O'Neal, nieves' paintings offer space for her own and others' quiet reflection and contemplation. She credits both the writing and visual components of her practice with helping her to find her voice and creating space for her to safely release long-buried emotions.

She graduated from Camden County College as an Associate of Arts (AA).

Deborah Roberts, b. 1962

Deborah Roberts' mixed media work challenges the notion of ideal beauty, challenging stereotypes and myths making room for women of color who are not included in a notion of universal beauty. She herself states 'Whether I was aware of it or not, otherness has been at the center of my consciousness since the beginning of my artistic career. My early ideals of race and beauty were shaped by and linked through paintings of renaissance artists and photographs in fashion magazines. Those images were mythical, heroic, beautiful, and powerful and embodied a particular status that was not afforded equally to anyone I knew. Those images influenced the way I viewed myself and other African Americans, which led me to investigate the way our identities have been imagined and shaped by societal interpretations of beauty.'

Tajh Rust, b. 1989, lives and works in New York, NY

Tajh Rust's environmental portrait paintings explore the relationships between Black identity and space. Through close collaborations with his subjects and influenced by film, literature, photography, imagination, and life itself, his intimate sceneries in soft color palettes aim to expand understanding and appreciation of the mundane. Rust is interested in drawing connections primarily between people across the Black diaspora, and uses his own travels to inform this exploration, incorporating people from the Caribbean, West Africa, and the Americas.

Rust holds a BFA from The Cooper Union and a MFA from Yale School of Art.

Marcus Leslie Singleton, b. 1990, Seattle, Washington, lives and works in Brooklyn, NY

A devoted observer, Marcus Leslie Singleton is always armed with a notebook, capturing anything of interest, be it people, phrases, or random thoughts. With these sketches as source material for his paintings, the resulting works are an intertwining of personal impressions and broader societal issues like race and representation. Naturally playful brush strokes and expressive placement of color in his paintings offer a jovial yet serious perspective.

Brittney Leeanne Williams, b. 1990, Pasadena, CA, lives and works in Chicago

Brittney Leeanne Williams focuses on the body as the primary subject of her pictorial investigations. Her works depict human-like forms in a state of transformation, with bodies contorted and shaped in unusual ways—figures entangled in draperies, all subject to unseen pressures or forces that extend beyond the visible. With a rich and deep colour palette, Williams infuses an interplay between the seen and the unseen, echoing the delicate balance between the presence and absence of the body on the canvas. Williams employs anthropomorphic forms as conduits for her exploration of race and gender, placing self-representation at the centre of her

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practice. Whether through semi-abstracted female silhouettes, drapery enveloping invisible bodies, or depictions of the artist herself, these elements serve as contemplative reflections on self-representation and the profound portrayal of the female experience as a Black individual. Their potent symbolism, combined with references to historical paintings, subvert conventional narratives and embrace potentially fresh perspectives on issues of identity and spirituality.

Williams attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Lulama Wolf, b. 1993, lives and works in Johannesburg, South Africa

At the intersection of Neo-Expressionism and Modern African Art, Lulama Wolf interrogates the pre-colonial African experience through the contemporary mind by using smearing, scraping, and deep pigment techniques that were used in vernacular architecture, and the patterns created largely by women to decorate traditional African homes.