

Gallery 1957

Patrick Alston

I've Never Known Home

13 Oct - 19 Nov, 2021. Gallery 1957, London, UK.

Inspired by his first visit to the continent via a residency at Gallery 1957, Ghana in 2021, Alston explores themes of belonging, identity and displacement. The artist reflects on the effects of losing a sense of home and the power of the return to the continent for those who have been displaced throughout history.



Patrick Alston *The Sea that Parts Us*, 2021. Acrylic, oil, oil stick and Kente cloth on sewn fabric and vinyl. 183 x 183 cm / 72 x 72 in. Copyright the Artist. Photo courtesy Gallery 1957.

Gallery 1957, is delighted to present a selection of works by African-American abstract expressionist artist Patrick Alston marking his first solo show in London and first with the gallery. After a 2-month residency in Accra, Ghana - Alston has incorporated traditional textiles and techniques into his work - namely Akan Kente cloth and wax-resist batik dyed cotton fabric - adding new depth and further complexity to his oeuvre. Inspired by his first trip to the continent, Alston explores themes of belonging, identity and displacement, and reflects on the effects of losing a sense of home, and the power of the return to the continent for those who have been displaced throughout history.

Patrick Alston asserts “I seek to contribute to the dialogue of the native black experience through the use of abstraction, opposed to the black figure, in an attempt to further expand the conversation of blackness outside of the physical and visual structures of figurative painting.”

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Writer Aindrea Emelife beckons:

"Look closer. Alston wants you to see the beauty in the unexpected. Abstraction is a language. Fluid and adaptable, Alston seeks to understand the connection between abstraction and Black English vernacular. He explains, "I'm interested in how we abstract the English language to tell a narrative". Vital to his practice is the exploration of the relationship between image and language. Thus, titles are crucial to the process. This exhibition's title, I've Never Known Home establishes the motive of the show; displacement, homecoming and projected senses of self. Made during his first trip to the African Continent, in Ghana, Alston reflects the cultural surroundings with the incorporation of kente cloth. "Kente represents a utopic idea of what a home I've never known was". In Kente, the beautiful multicoloured cloth rich in symbols are not necessarily figurative, they are abstracted."

About the artist

Patrick Alston energetically creates works that, along with the interplay of titles, trigger thought-provoking and reflective topics including but not limited to socio-politics, identity, language, and the psychology of color. Alston's re-contextualized subjects, rich palettes and complex compositions are dramatized exhilarating energies, expressed through gestural mark making that help to project an unwritten aesthetic that makes up the urban landscape. In his work, the artist draws on the correlation between image and language. The selection of his titles plays a crucial role within the artist's process, comparing abstraction to that of Black English Vernacular as a form of understanding the complexities of language. Alston's images create harmonious tension and challenge viewers to look carefully at the world around them, discovering beauty in unconventional places.

Patrick Alston was born and raised in the Bronx, New York in 1991. He grew up in the South Bronx and attended Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana, studying Art and Psychology. Since then, he has worked between New Haven, Connecticut and NYC

About Gallery 1957

Based in Accra, with a London outpost opened in 2020, Gallery 1957 has a curatorial focus on West Africa. Presenting a programme of exhibitions, installations and performances by the region's most significant artists, the gallery serves as a vital platform, promoting West Africa's presence within the art scene by hosting ambitious exhibitions, providing resources for residencies and participating in international art fairs. Founded by Marwan Zakhem in 2016, Gallery 1957 has evolved from over 15 years of private collecting. The gallery now hosts three spaces in Accra – one in the Kempinski Hotel and two in the Galleria Mall – and a London outpost in Hyde Park Gate.

Artist: Patrick Alston

Title: *I've Never Known Home*

Dates: 13 Oct - 19 Nov, 2021

Opening: 12th Oct, 2021 - 6pm

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