

Gallery 1957

Patrick Eugène

Where Do We Go From Here

21 August – 18 September 2021

Opening reception 20th August.

Gallery 1957 Accra



Patrick Eugene *Somethings Brewing*, 2021. Acrylic on Canvas 30 x 36 in. Image Courtesy of the Artist and Gallery 1957.

Gallery 1957 Accra is pleased to present a new body of work by Haitian-American artist Patrick Eugène in his first solo exhibition with the gallery.

Where Do We Go From Here? borrows its title from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s seminal and final text. The works consist of still, nuanced, and pensive vignettes, figuratively representing Black artists as they conceptualize creativity. Eugène has created a body of work that departs from acutely rendered facial features, and deploys loose, layered strokes of pigment that depict the energetic auras of his subjects. The work honours the rigorous mental, and emotional labour that artists are tasked to selflessly encounter and endure, in order to create work that might inspire, heal, spur thought and social change.

In 1967, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. isolated himself from the demands of the Civil Rights Movement, rented a house in Jamaica with no telephone, and laboured over his final manuscript. Similarly, In the isolation and solitude enabled by the pandemic, Eugène spent countless hours praying and painting alone, as a spiritual practice of self-care. The daily routine led him to consider how Black artists who experienced traumatic times of the past, while creating profound work, also practiced selfcare. For *Where Do We Go From Here?* Eugène transposes vintage photography depicting Black artists both candidly and formally posed, into composite portraits that deviate from naturalism, evoking the expressionism indicative of West African masks, and composed in the vibrant hues of Haitian carnival.

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Though strongly referencing the past, Eugène's current body of work facilitates an existential and intersectional dialogue rooted in contemporary concepts of Blackness and Pan-Africanism, while in conversation with the styles of historic Black artists like Beauford Delaney, Horace Pippin, and Boscoe Holder. While conceptually traversing through a lens of the past, Eugène deploys his own emotions, and narratives deriving from introspection and his personal search for the creative self. With a robust painterly technique, displaying broad strokes, layered hues, and impressionistic lighting, Eugène reimagines present day contemporary dancers, poets, painters and sculptors, and voids that subtly represent domestic space.

Where Do We Go From Here explores how canonical Western art movements, such as Mannerism, Primitivism, and Abstract Expressionism which were deeply dependent on the cultural production of Africa and this contemporary moment are inextricably linked. Eugène's elegant, sumptuous, expressive, and mannerist style, poetically documents the human condition, while focusing on a community that continues to face grave societal challenges.

Eugène leverages the beauty, bravery, brilliance, and boldness of Black artists of the past, presenting a compelling reminder of their living legacy. It is clear that for this artist, the answer to Dr. King's haunting question of "where do we go from here?" is found in imagining where one's ancestors have already been.

An excerpt of exhibition text by Danny Dunson.



Patrick Eugene in his Atlanta studio, 2021. Photography by Erica J Simmons courtesy Gallery 1957.

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About the artist

Patrick Eugène (b. 1985) creates large scale figurative compositions that derive from his concentration in Abstract Expressionism. This new body of work is in dialogue with historic Black artists like Beauford Delaney, Horace Pippin, Bosco Holder and Ed Clark, and contemporary artists like Lynette Yiadom-Boakye, and Henry Taylor. Eugène depicts the complex narratives of human experience within quotidian scenes of Black America.

As a son of Haitian immigrants, Eugène incorporates African Diasporic connections between Haiti (the Caribbean), and North America within his intuitive practice that connects him to everyday people, seen in the streets of Atlanta, GA. In his studio practice, photographs taken by the artist are later transposed into portraits that deviate from naturalism and evoke the abstractionism of ancient Africa and the vibrant color palettes of Haiti.

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 Galleria Mall – and a London outpost in Hyde Park Gate.

Artist: Patrick Eugène

Title: *Where Do We Go From Here*

Dates: 21 August – 18 September 2021

Opening: Friday 20th August, 2021 @ 6pm.

Address: Gallery 1957 Located in Kempinski Hotel Gold Coast City & Galleria Mall

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