



Laurena Finéus, *Nou te gen yon paradi pou antere (We had a paradise to bury)*, 2022, oil and acrylic on canvas (diptych), 72 x 36 in each and 72 x 72 in total

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Horses Stood Like Men

Franz Caba, Laurena Finéus, Michael Grant, Madjeen Isaac, Esteban Ramón Pérez, JJ Pickney, and Mark Anthony Wilson Jr.

Curated by Dr. Margarita Lila Rosa

January 28 – March 11, 2023

OPENING RECEPTION

Saturday, January 28, 2023, 6–9 pm

CURATORIAL AND ARTIST TOUR

Saturday, January 28, 2023, 7–8 pm

#thehorsesstoodlikemen #jenkinsjohnsonprojects #jenkinsjohnsongallery
#drmargaritalilarosa @jenkinsjohnsongallery

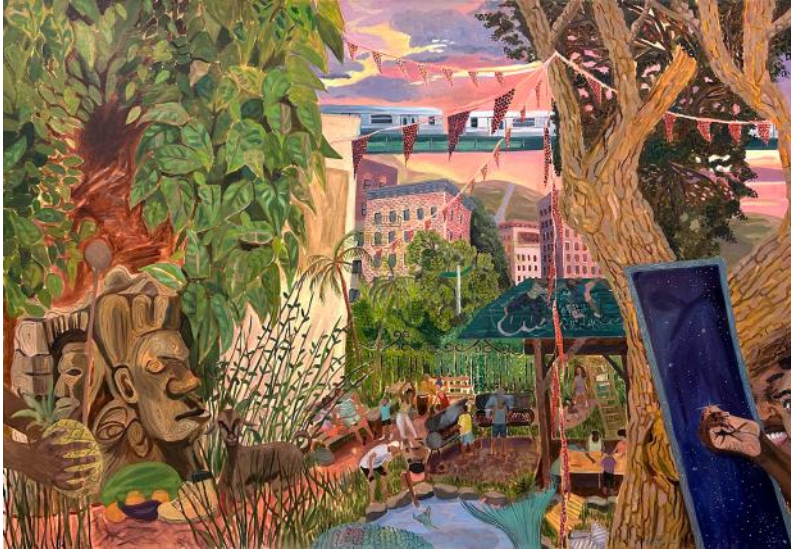
Jenkins Johnson Projects, New York is pleased to present *The Horses Stood Like Men*, a group exhibition curated by Dr. Margarita Lila Rosa. The exhibition features artists **Franz Caba, Laurena Finéus, Michael Grant, Madjeen Isaac, Esteban Ramón Pérez, JJ Pinckney, and Mark Anthony Wilson Jr.**

During the opening reception on January 28, 2023, from 6-9 pm, curator Dr. Rosa will be joined by the artists for a talk about the exhibition from 7-8 pm.

The Horses Stood Like Men takes its title from Toni Morrison's novel, *Home*, where the late author uses animals to illuminate the brutality and beauty of humanity. In the novel's opening scene, two Black children sneak into a field in Lotus, Georgia, where they are alarmed to find two horses biting "each other like dogs", "their raised hooves crashing and striking". The children hurry back through the tall grass, crawling their way out of the field, when they spot, in the distance, a man being tossed alive into a dug-out hole, his quivering leg extending out of the dirt cavity. Yet, the novel's protagonist insists that he had forgotten all about the burial. "I only remembered the horses," he narrates. "They were so beautiful. So brutal. And they stood like men." The simultaneous beauty and brutality of rural life becomes a rich soil in we plant mythologies, fables, and syncretic traditions. This group exhibition engages with the countryside as a fecund site for exploring the relationship between humans and the natural and spiritual worlds. Countryside mythologies account for the turbulence, violence, and dominance of nature within rural life.



Franz Caba, *Ni para ti ni para nadie*, 2022, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60 in



Madjeen Isaac, *The Presence of Gran Bwa*, 2022, oil on canvas, 50 x 72 in

Yet they also account for the abundance, fertility, and spiritual fecundity of the land. In the context of syncretic societies, such as those of the Caribbean, the American south, and the rural west, themes of beauty and bestiality intersect, giving humans the feel of horses, and making horses as beastly, and as unequivocally dangerous, as humans.

Laurena Finéus is a Haitian visual artist, educator and art administrator specialized in painting. She was born and raised in Gatineau, Québec, and is currently based in New York. In her practice, Finéus has been concerned with representations of Haiti, relationality within its diaspora, and its growing archives across the globe through an array of figurative and painterly imagined landscapes. These elements are juxtaposed with personal memories of

her life in so-called Canada. The teachings of Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot in 'Silencing the past' informs her understanding of visual narration in her practice. Finéus' strategies include the collapsing of history in order to question its production and its mechanisms.

Finéus is a graduate from the University of Ottawa with a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a minor in Communication. Her work has been exhibited at the Ottawa Art Gallery (2021), Karsh-Masson Gallery (2021), the Ottawa school of Art (2021), Art mûr (2019) and Gallery 101 (2022) among others and is part of a range of private collections internationally. She was recently the recipient of the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant (2022), the Ottawa Arts Council IBPOC Emerging Artist Award (2022), and the Edmund and Isobel Ryan Visual art scholarship (2020).

Franz Caba is a Dominican architect and self-taught artist. Caba proposes the idea of a Caribbean duality, the existence of a tangible and material Caribbean in which he lives daily, and an imaginary Caribbean that arises from the fantasies and the desire for the foreign gaze. Caba's work centers on the colonial processes of extraction and exploitation in the manufacture of an ideal, a consumable and marketable paradise that influences the perception of those who inhabit it and those who visit this insular space. Developing the landscape from his imagination, along with image-sourcing from the internet, Caba engages in the reconstruction of paradisiacal postcards and spatial narratives. Using satire and absurdity to question the fantasies about the identity of the Dominican Republic and the Caribbean, Caba intervenes in these reimagined territories with



Esteban Ramón Pérez, *Camero*, 2020, leather, urethane, acrylic, metal leaf and flake, steel, 34 x 60 in



JJ Pinkney, *My soul in 3,000 years*, 2021, acrylic, oil, soft pastel, woodless color pencil, and crayon on wood panel, 72 x 52 in

objects and animals that, despite not being endemic to the Caribbean context, have positioned themselves as symbols of our identity and ways of life.

In 2020, Franz Caba was part of the 28th Annual Concurso de Arte Eduardo León Jimenes in Santiago de los Caballeros, Dominican Republic. Caba's solo show "Estoy aquí pero no soy yo" (I Am here but I Am Not Me) showed at the Peña Defilló Museum in July 2022 in Santo Domingo Dominican Republic. He was part of the Caribbean Linked V residency in Oranjestad, Aruba, in 2018.

Madjeen Isaac is a Brooklyn based Haitian American visual artist whose practice is rooted in hybridizing and assembling mélanges of reimagined environments. Growing up in a predominantly Caribbean neighborhood and being a first-generation American influences Isaac's process of commemorating her community, memories and cultures that shaped her upbringing. Isaac calls for environmental justice, food sovereignty and land stewardship by centering narratives of Black and Caribbean folks leaning into their ancestral practice of agriculture and tending to the spaces they occupy in order to receive an abundance of joy, liberation and leisure in return. Isaac invites viewers of her work as both an outsider looking in and possibly existing in her worlds without the constraints of reality.

Isaac received a BFA in Fine Art from The Fashion Institute of Technology (2018) and an MA in Art+Edu & Community Practice at New York University (2021). Isaac is also an alum of the Laundromat Project Fellowship and is currently a BRIClab artist in residence at BRIC.

Michael Grant works across diverse media, including photography, video, collage, and sound design. He investigates the aesthetics of blackness, class, family, relationship and cultural diversities within subcultures. Through subtle tones of memory, and preservation of legacy; Grant aims to create a visual language that celebrates and honors black cowboys and cowgirls for their contributions to building and upholding the American west. His recent works highlight the rituals, and rite of passage surrounding the sanctuary that is the black rodeo. By doing so, Grant cultivates an alternative visual archive that suspends the viewer between the erasure of black western heritage and the empowerment in understanding one's own identity. Grant has had works published in the New York Times, Lenscratch, Pitchfork, among other publications; and has exhibited at the Chrysler Museum of Art.

Esteban Ramón Pérez's multi-disciplinary practice is an interrogation and excavation of subjective memory, spirituality, fragmented history, and social-political reality. Raised in his father's upholstery shop, he utilizes the skill set gained as his apprentice to work with a multitude of materials including leather scraps, feathers, horns, and found objects into sculptures and sculptural paintings. Lowriding was his introduction to painting, and rascuache was his path into sculpture. Pérez's states, "my work is a tribute to the community that raised me, a testimony of my aspirations and



Mark Anthony Wilson Jr., Black Seminole Johanna July, 2022, cardboard, plaster wrap, acrylic paint, leather belt, faux flowers, bolts, shells, beads, nails, crosses, feathers, lighters, spoons, found objects, butterfly, mothers jewelry, camera, horse shoes, wire, jewelry case, cigarettes, mic, 40 x 26 x 37 in

what I've witnessed, and an attempt to relate". He has a BFA in Art from the California Institute of the Arts, and an MFA in Painting & Printmaking from Yale University's School of Art. He is a recent NXTHVN fellow. Pérez lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

JJ Pinckney is a self-taught multidisciplinary artist who specializes in abstract - figurative expressionist artworks that center on what he believes are "Neo- ancestral connections". He enacts this calling through abstract portraiture, figurative storytelling and assemblage sculpture. Pinckney encapsulates the vision and privy ingeniously through philosophy, critical thinking, and color tone. The instinctual knowledge of his faith and spiritual lead practice allows him to channel freedoms lost through a quickly changing and evolving society. Through dialogue and reflection his observations

become yours, he imputes the abstract in ways that recollects the diversity of perception and meaning. The blueprint of his work is constructed through several art movements, most noticeably the "New York School" (expressionistic art of the 50s & 60s) alongside unique 1980s expressionist graffiti pioneers. He continues to undertake his ancestral guidance using literary ingenuity, research, and oral traditions granting an unfolding of truth through visual storytelling. JJ continues to implement mutual aid through social justice restoration initiatives from his studio space in the heart of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn.

Mark Anthony Wilson Jr is a self-taught artist whose practice marries the unveiling of African American heritage with Afrofuturism through sculpture and painting. A background in football, playing at the University of Cincinnati. Earning his master's degree (2018) in Applied Behavior Analysis. Mark found his passion for art during his career as a therapist. Inspired by the Indigenous Totem Poles in Washington, he developed an identity in masquerade. Mark's art was recognized by the Black Artist Fund in 2020. Encouraged by the relationship between Black and Indigenous cultures. He uses an assortment of influential materials creating a dystopian nature. Mark's work is now used to navigate how Black and Brown people imagine themselves in the future. While also reimagining our past through Afrofuturism. Mark Wilson's art has been exhibited in multiple group exhibitions and public installations in the United States. In 2022 he completed an international residency in Oakville, Canada (The Contemporary Arts Network) and first international group exhibition in Abuja, Nigeria (Thought Pyramid Art Centre).

For more information on this exhibition please contact the gallery at:
212.629.0707 or info@jenkinsjohnsongallery.com.
Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Saturday, 11am- 6pm
www.jenkinsjohnsongallery.com

Jenkins Johnson Projects is accessible by B and Q lines via public transportation and is a 20-minute walk from the Brooklyn Museum.

All images courtesy of the artists and Jenkins Johnson Projects, Brooklyn, NY.