

Philemona Williamson

Disproportionate Upheavals

November 1 - December 20, 2025

Opening Reception

Saturday, November 1, 2025
4:00 - 6:00 PM

Artist Walkthrough

5:00 PM

Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco, is pleased to present *Disproportionate Upheavals*, the gallery's second solo exhibition with narrative painter Philemona Williamson. The opening reception is Saturday, November 1, from 4:00-6:00 PM. During the reception, there will be a walkthrough with the artist at 5:00 PM. The exhibition remains on view through December 20, 2025.

Philemona Williamson, based in New Jersey, is known for her figurative paintings. Williamson's narratives of childhood and adolescence create a space of fable and memory investigating the dissonance, possibility, and liminal state of transition. With a career spanning over forty years, she creates an iconography both personal and universal.

Figures are dynamic, passionate, volatile, familiar, and strange—moving through moments of uncertainty and landscapes beyond control. Toys and objects act as repositories of emotion and memory. Poetic and open-ended, the paintings invite viewers to tap into their own stories of change, chaos, and possibility.

Disproportionate Upheavals includes eight paintings created between 2024 and 2025, along with a significant piece from 2016.

Dwelling in Discord (2025) interweaves two very different places from her childhood: the upscale



Philemona Williamson, *Dwelling in Discord*, 2025
oil on canvas, 36 x 40 in (91.4 x 101.6 cm)

Upper East Side NYC apartment where her parents worked and lived, and a small room in a Harlem hotel with a communal kitchen. From a young age, she had to navigate these contrasting worlds. Williamson affirms that the longing for home, safety, and a sense of belonging in the world never diminishes.

The paintings are visually and technically fluid, with brushstrokes moving through saturated fields of color. The underlying hues in each piece emerge strongly through the figures; ambiguous gestures blur the boundaries between figures and their surroundings. Every plant, animal, object, and landscape feels resonant—as if recalling a half-remembered dream or a return to childhood memories.

A Crooked Line (2016) was inspired by Williamson's 2015 artist-in-residence experience at the Joan Mitchell Center in New Orleans. She explains, "I would often witness the Second Line parades held for important occasions, both joyful and somber. Here, I conjured that heightened revelry, both public and private, that seems to burst forth when one is free to be their authentic self."

Philemona Williamson's (b.1951, New York, NY) work is in institutional collections including: Baltimore

Museum of Art, MD; Montclair Art Museum, NJ; The Kalamazoo Art Institute, MI; the Sheldon Museum of Art, NE; CNAP: The French National Contemporary Art Collection; and Fondation Francès, Clichy, France. Museum exhibitions include the Queens Museum of Art, NY; the Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC; the Bass Museum, Miami, FL; and Contemporary Art, St. Louis, MO. In 2019, a mid-career survey was held at the Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey.

Upcoming in 2026: a group exhibition at the Newark Museum and an exhibition curated by Camilo Alvarez, opening in March 2026 at the Mattatuck Museum, Waterbury, CT. Her work is currently on view at Fondation Villa Datriis, Vaucluse, France. In 2024, Williamson exhibited in *Century: 100 Years of Black Art* at the Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey.

Williamson is the recipient of numerous awards including Anonymous Was A Woman; Joan Mitchell Foundation Award in Painting; Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant; National Endowment for the Arts; and New York Foundation for the Arts. Williamson has taught painting at numerous colleges, including Pratt Institute and Hunter College, New York City, and served on the Advisory Board of the Getty Center for Education in California.



Philemona Williamson, *Uneven Terrain*, 2025
oil on canvas, 48 x 56 in (121.9 x 142.2 cm)

For press and general inquiries, please contact info@jenkinsjohnsongallery.com or call +1 415 677 0770. More information is available on our website, www.jenkinsjohnsongallery.com



Philemona Williamson, *A Crooked Line*, 2016, oil on canvas, 55 x 80 in (139.7 x 203.2 cm)