

111 Franklin Street, NYC 10013

PARALLELS & PERIPHERIES

Practice + Presence

Curated by **Larry Ossei-Mensah** and **Robyn Gibson****February 10 – March 7, 2021**

On view daily by appointment, 10 am – 6 pm

Gallery tour with the curators: **February 10, 6:30 pm via Instagram Live**Zoom Panel Discussion with curators and artists: **February 17, 6:30 pm****New York Academy of Art****111 Franklin Street, New York, NY 10013**

The New York Academy of Art is pleased to announce *Parallels & Peripheries: Practice + Presence*, an exhibition showcasing work created by primarily BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) artists affiliated with the Academy, on view February 10 through March 7. The in-person show is [available to view by appointment](#) and will be accompanied by a virtual exhibition via Eazel and a digital catalog featuring essays by the curators. In lieu of an opening reception, on February 10 at 6:30 pm, curator **Larry Ossei-Mensah** and assistant curator **Robyn Gibson** will offer a guided tour of the show on Instagram Live. On February 17, the curators will hold a [virtual public panel discussion with featured artists over Zoom](#).

Parallels and Peripheries presents work by over 40 artists associated with the New York Academy of Art, including Visiting Critics, alumni of the Academy's MFA program, full time and adjunct faculty, Visiting Speakers, and currently enrolled students. As with all Academy exhibition, the interaction of works by high-profile contemporary artists such as **Eddie Arroyo, Jean Shin, Paul Anthony Smith** and **Beverly McIver** with emerging artists and art students just embarking on their careers provides a forum for a rich and robust dialogue.

The exhibition explores and interrogates representation, identity, and the place of an artist in depicting themselves and others; an especially important discourse given the Academy's role as a national center for contemporary figurative art and portraiture. The exhibition provides a platform to further explore narratives, ideas and concerns of artists whose voices have not been centered within the traditional art historical canon. The works in the show grapple with a variety of subject matter that centers the viewpoints of BIPOC artists, while holding space for these voices in the halls of the Academy.



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Curator **Larry Ossei-Mensah** notes that “BIPOC artists are cultivating dynamic artistic practices designed to amplify perspectives and points of view that historically have pushed to the margins.” *Parallels & Peripheries* is the fifth in an exhibition series curated by Ossei-Mensah investigating how contemporary artists create work constructed from narratives, myths, experiences, and memories that shape personal, political, and societal identities.

Robyn Gibson, an alumna of the Academy’s MFA program, and assistant curator for the exhibition, writes of her impetus for the staging of the show:

As a Black artist studying at the New York Academy of Art, I often asked myself “Where do I fit?” And more strongly, “Do I even belong here?” Black artists in predominantly white institutions often experience a scarcity of faces like our own. We are also immersed in a history of art that excludes our ancestors from the conversation or curriculum. It can get exhausting, but there comes a time when you have to push back and create space for yourself.

This exhibition insurance is sponsored by **AXA XL**.

About New York Academy of Art

Founded in 1982 by artists, scholars and patrons of the arts, including Andy Warhol, the New York Academy of Art is a not-for-profit educational and cultural institution which combines intensive technical training in drawing, painting and sculpture with active critical discourse. Academy students are taught traditional methods and techniques and encouraged to use these skills to make vital contemporary art. Through major exhibitions, a lively speaker series, and an ambitious educational program, the Academy serves as a creative and intellectual center for all artists dedicated to highly skilled, conceptually aware figurative and representational art.

About the curators

Larry Ossei-Mensah uses contemporary art as a vehicle to redefine how we see ourselves and the world around us. The Ghanaian-American curator and cultural critic has organized exhibitions and programs at commercial and nonprofit spaces around the globe from New York City to Rome featuring artists such as Firelei Baez, Allison Janae Hamilton, Brendan Fernandes, Ebony G. Patterson, Modou Dieng, Glenn Kaino, Joiri Minaya and Stanley Whitney to name a few. Moreover, Ossei-Mensah has actively documented cultural happenings featuring the most dynamic visual artists working today such as Derrick Adams, Mickalene Thomas, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Federico Solmi, and Kehinde Wiley.

A native of The Bronx, Ossei-Mensah is also the co-founder of [ARTNOIR](#), a 501(c)(3) and global collective of culturalists who design multimodal experiences aimed to engage this generation’s dynamic and diverse creative class. ARTNOIR endeavors to celebrate the artistry and creativity by Black and Brown artists around the world via virtual and in-person experiences. Ossei-Mensah is a contributor to the first-ever Ghanaian Pavilion for the 2019 Venice Biennial with an essay on the work of visual artist Lynette Yiadom-Boakye.

Ossei-Mensah is the former Susanne Feld Hilberry Senior Curator at MOCAD in Detroit. He co-curated in 2019 with Dexter Wimberly the critically acclaimed exhibition at MOAD in San Francisco Coffee, Rhum, Sugar, Gold: A Postcolonial Paradox in Spring/Summer 2019. Ossei-Mensah currently serves as Curator-at-Large at BAM, where he curated the inaugural exhibition When A Pot Finds Its Purpose featuring the work of Glenn Kaino at the Rudin Family Gallery. He will be co-curating with Omsk Social Club 7th Athens Biennale in Athens, Greece in 2021.

Ossei-Mensah has had recent profiles in such publications The New York Times, Artsy, and Cultured Magazine, and was recently named to Artnet’s 2020 Innovator List.



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Robyn Gibson is an emerging artist and curator living and working in Brooklyn, New York. She completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Louisville in 2014, earning a BFA in Painting and a BSBA in Marketing. Since receiving her MFA in 2018 from the New York Academy of Art, Gibson has been developing her multidimensional art practice. In 2020 she completed a seven-month residency at the Armory Art Center in West Palm Beach, Florida. After she started boxing in 2016, Gibson began incorporating it into her art practice. Larger-than-life-sized bold, gestural charcoal figures on canvas, a lyrical writing style meant to pack a punch, and voluptuous vessels inspired by her own curves all convey the movement and force important to her work and inspired by her boxing practice. The act of taking up space and claiming ownership of it is important to her work. As a Black artist focused on self-portraiture and the exploration of her trauma, Gibson grapples with Black identity, the depiction, perception, and value of Black bodies, and what it means to be authentic.

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