

# RUSSO ▲ LEE GALLERY

The Russo Lee Gallery is pleased to present ***But, why are you here?*** This exhibition, in recognition of Juneteenth, is a celebration of diversity and inclusivity through art. In featuring the works of **Intisar Abioto, Julian V.L. Gaines, Lisa Jarrett, Otis Kwame Kye Quicoe, and Samantha Wall**, Russo Lee Gallery is committed to providing an opportunity for these extraordinary artists to share experiences and perspectives as Black artists working and living in Oregon. Collectively, the artists determined what works they will exhibit. Various small and large-scale pieces will be on view, in a number of mediums, from oil and acrylic on canvas to photography and limited-edition prints. As part of the exhibition, there will be a catalog available featuring a conversation among the artists and an essay by Dr. Kiara Hill, visiting Assistant Professor of Art History at Portland State University.

## **Intisar Abioto**

Invitational artist, Intisar Abioto (b. Memphis, TN. 1986) is an explorer-artist working across photography, dance, and writing. Moving from the visionary and embodied root of Blackgirl Southern cross-temporal cross-modal storytelling ways, her works refer to the living breath/breadth of people of African descent against the expanse of their storied, geographic, and imaginative landscapes. Abioto's photographs illustrated the Urban League of Portland's State of Black Oregon 2015, and she was a contributing photographer to MFON: Women Photographers of the African Diaspora (2017). She is the recipient of a 2018 Oregon Humanities Emerging Journalists, Community Stories Fellowship for which she began a continuing body of research on the history of artists of African descent in Oregon. Selected for an Art in the Governor's Office solo exhibition in 2019, she exhibited and performed with nine Oregon-based Black artists against the inner expanse of the Oregon State Capitol building in Salem OR. Currently, Abioto is the guest curator of the special exhibition Black Artists of Oregon at the Portland Art Museum, August 26, 2023 - March 17, 2024.

## **Julian V.L. Gaines**

Originally from Chicago, Julian V.L. Gaines now lives and works in Portland, Oregon. He received his BFA in Painting from Northern Michigan University in 2015. As a painter, Gaines' artwork addresses activism, education, and tells stories that need to be told. He collaborated with Nike to create the collection "Game Worn". As part of the sneaker release, he led a weeklong workshop that included art classes at Chicago's South Shore Cultural Center. Gaines has received editorials from Northern Magazine, HYPEBEAST, and The New York Times. In December 2020, his artwork was featured on the cover of New York Magazine. His work has been exhibited at Art Basel, featured in an exhibition with Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects in New York, and exhibited at the Seattle Art Fair, Seattle WA. Gaines is represented by Russo Lee Gallery, Portland, OR. His first solo exhibition with RLG was in August 2022. His artwork is in numerous private and corporate collections, as well as the collection of the Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR.

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## **Lisa Jarrett**

Lisa Jarrett is an artist and educator living and working in Portland, OR. She is Associate Professor of Community and Context Arts at Portland State University. Jarrett exhibits nationally and co-founded/co-directs KSMoCA (Dr Martin Luther King Jr School Museum of Contemporary Art); the Harriet Tubman Middle School Center for Expanded Curatorial Practice; and Art 25: Art in the Twenty-fifth Century. Her intersectional (and often collaborative) practice considers the politics of difference within a variety of settings including: schools, landscapes, fictions, racial imaginaries, studios, communities, museums, galleries, walls, mountains, mirrors, floors, rivers, and lenses. She exists and makes socially engaged work within the African Diaspora. Lisa Jarrett is represented by Russo Lee Gallery, Portland, OR.

## **Otis Kwame Kye Quaicoe**

Invitational artist, Otis Kwame Kye Quaicoe (b.1988, Accra, Ghana) is based in Portland, OR. His figuration is built upon a palette where color becomes its own language of transformation, be it social, political, or personal. His are images of empowerment and redemption, sophistication and humility, curiosity, and quietude. Each figure becomes a symbol of the reclamation of cultural dignity, embracing the idea of origin and personal narrative as it relates to gender and race dynamics. Quaicoe attended the Ghanatta College of Art and Design for Fine Art in Accra, Ghana, with a focus on painting. He has been part of numerous group and solo exhibitions both nationally and internationally since 2014. Quaicoe's artwork is in many private and public collections, and he has been included in selected Press such as Los Angeles Times, Juxtapoz, and OPB (Oregon Public Broadcasting).

## **Samantha Wall**

Originally from Seoul, South Korea, Samantha Wall immigrated to the United States as a child. She received her BFA from The University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC, and her MFA from Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland, OR. Wall's drawing practice is informed by her experiences as a Black-Korean immigrant. Her drawings explore identity through the push and pull of cultural diaspora and human interconnectedness. Her work has been featured in both solo and group exhibitions regionally and nationally. Wall is the recipient of awards and grants from organizations including the Oregon Arts Commission; Portland, Oregon's Regional Arts & Culture Council; The Ford Family Foundation; and The Joan Mitchell Foundation. She was also a finalist for the Portland Art Museum's Contemporary Northwest Art Awards 2016 and the winner of the Arlene Schnitzer Prize. Samantha Wall is represented by Russo Lee Gallery, Portland, OR.