

ADIA MILLETT

Reflections on Black

Exhibition Dates: January 16 - March 9, 2024

Opening Reception: Friday, January 19, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Featuring a live performance by Rewards Program (Miles Lassi, Phillip Laurent, and Zekarias Thompson)

Haines Gallery is proud to present ***Reflections on Black***, our first solo exhibition with Oakland-based multidisciplinary artist **Adia Millett**. Blackness and the subtleties of moonlight inform Millett's palette in new paintings and glass mosaics that examine our experiences of literal and metaphorical darkness. Presenting a shadowy world navigated through introspection, *Reflections on Black* asks the questions: What do we see when we close our eyes, and when do we choose to close them?

Throughout *Reflections on Black*, Millett weaves threads of African American experiences with broader ideas about personal identity, collective history, and human interconnectivity. Inspired by the potential for transformative change, a suite of new paintings included in the show evoke nocturnal landscapes, with depths and dimensions revealed through texture, iridescence, and seemingly infinite shades of black. For Millett, what exists in the dark can represent the unseen, but is also where rest, meditation, and the deepening of our other senses can occur. She explains, "This show is an exploration of the many ways we can witness blackness and our personal relationships to it as a tool for clarity."

Blackness becomes a literal surface for reflection in luminous glass mosaics that invite viewers to see themselves within the richly colored surfaces of their multifaceted compositions. Here and elsewhere in the exhibition, Millett's compositions are dominated by geometric forms that are constantly in flux, abstract environments where hierarchies are dissolved and our notions of self and society—constructions of race and identity, cultural narratives, and systems of belief—can be deconstructed and reconsidered.

In Millett's work, images, ideas, and materials are taken apart and reassembled, drawing on traditional crafts such as quilting and stained glass. A series of three octagonal paintings recall at once cathedral rose windows, forms found in nature, and the optical sensation of patterned light that emerges behind shut eyes. Millett conceives of these works as portals, each a doorway or an opening—for light and



Adia Millett, *Sea-Sky of Gratitude*, 2024
Glass, grout on wood panel, 36 x 48 inches
Photo: Shaun Roberts



Adia Millett, *Integrity (portal)*, 2023/2024
Acrylic on wood, 36 x 36 inches
Photo: Shaun Roberts

for human connection—and named for the qualities (humility, integrity, empathy) that break down barriers and help us to understand those around us.

Throughout her practice, Millett establishes conscious links to the past—whether to her ancestors and foremothers, or to prior generations of artists and crafters—and collaborations with performers and musicians. For this exhibition, she asked Oakland-based sound artist **Miles Lassi** to develop an ethereal soundscape based around the themes of darkness and creativity, the relationship between our senses, and how sound can help to redefine the unknown. The subsequent composition was a source of inspiration for Millett as she worked, and is available for visitors to the exhibition to experience.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Adia Millett (b. 1975, Los Angeles, CA; lives and works in Oakland, CA) has been the subject of recent solo exhibitions at the Institute of Contemporary Art San Jose, CA; di Rosa Center for Contemporary Art, Napa, CA; San Jose Museum of Quilts & Textiles, CA; and The California African American Museum, Los Angeles, CA. Her work has additionally been included in group shows at the Barbican Art Gallery, London, UK; Frye Art Museum, Seattle, WA; Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, MI; MoMA PS1, New York, NY; Museum of African Diaspora, San Francisco, CA; New Museum, New York, NY; Oakland Museum of California, CA; and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL, among others. Millett was awarded the Anonymous Was A Woman Award (2021), and has completed residencies at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY (2002); Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA (2007); School of the Art Institute of Chicago's ThreeWalls Residency (2010); Fountainhead Residency, Miami, FL (2015); and the Hambidge Center, Rabun Gap, GA (2018).

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Adia Millett, *Undertones*, 2024
Acrylic on wood, 36 x 48 inches
Photo: Shaun Roberts



Adia Millett, *Black on Purpose*, 2023/2024
Acrylic and glitter on wood, 34.5 x 40 inches
Photo: Shaun Roberts