

Garry Grant at Lola Shepard: connecting his African ancestry to 21st century America



(L) Monolithic Reasons Why I'm African: The Great Benin Walls of The Inner (Ya High Technology II), 2021. (R) Monolithic Reasons Why I'm African: Portal 4 Kings and Queens, 2021.

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New York City-based, abstract artist [Garry Grant](#) opens his second solo exhibition with Lola Shepard titled OUR HISTORY IS OUR FUTURE, an online solo exhibition featuring select works on paper, wood panels, and canvas. The exhibition will be viewable online on [LolaShepard.com](#) from March 11 – April 23, 2022.



Grant, originally from Detroit is an artist on the rise. He's represented by UNREPD Gallery in Los Angeles, a new gallery space focusing on works by African American Artists of Color. He has several exhibitions in New York City, Los Angeles, Hawaii, Detroit, Dallas, and Atlanta. In 2021, Grant was nominated for the 34th Annual McNeese National *Works on Paper* exhibition at McNeese State University, LA.

Inspired by Morocco

Garry Grant

For this recent body of work, Grant took his inspiration from a trip he made to Marrakesh and Essaouira, Morocco, in 2015. The two cities' histories, their ancient Medinas, and their ornate design aesthetics had a profound impact on his art-making. In replicating the geometric motifs and vegetal patterns found throughout the cities' architecture, the artist turned to the medium of handmade paper as the vehicle of choice to construct the elaborate works of art.



Pharaonic Future Monuments II, 2020

In creating the complex works, Grant draws out the design on paper first. He then builds the piece, layering paper onto paper, allowing the positive and negative spaces to be part of the artwork. Incorporating scribing lines and scoring techniques, the artist then applies shellac and lush, bold colors in acrylic paint, often integrating gold, silver, and copper leaf to create depth and vibrancy. The resulting color-drenched motifs reference the ornate designs of the doorways, archways, monuments, and walls of Moroccan medinas.

The exhibition includes works from several ongoing series

For example, the *Marrakesh Entrance* series showcases the elegant arched doorways of Marrakesh in vivid color. The intricate, lattice doorways in *The Gateway to Eternal Souls* series refer to the themes of life and death and pay homage to the passing away of loved ones during the pandemic.



Constructed out of paper and thin wood slats, the interlacing, mosaic-like pattern in the *Fortalice Grid* series portrays an aerial perspective of the bustling cities of Morocco. The large-scale panoramic triptych painting *Fortifications A.V.B.M. (Aerial View Blue Midnight)*, beautifully rendered in aerial view, depicts Marrakesh at night. Appearing monochromatic from a distance, Grant applies acrylic paint in muted colors of black, brown, and blue to the canvas by hand, manipulating the pigments until attenuated forms cover the surface. In adding pressure to the canvas, a cracked-pattern effect is revealed, providing a rich texture to the composition.



Pharaonic Future Monuments IV, 2020

The somber, contemplative series *Black Egyptian Relic* features ancient African funeral tablets with written scripture, and *The Black Mausoleum* series depicts funeral monuments. In this series, Grant embeds woodcut pieces, in a variety of shapes, on to the paper, creating a highly tactile surface.

In his newest series, *The Monolithic Series*, Grant blurs the boundaries between sculpture and painting. Applying cut wood pieces on wood panels to create dimensionality, the works in this series serve as a tribute to the architectural grandeur of ancient African civilizations.

Distinctly contemporary and dynamic to behold, Garry Grant's oeuvre is a testament to his deep connection with his African ancestry and the lived experience of a Black man in twenty-first-century America.

For more information

LolaShepard.com