

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



(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.

GARRY GRANT

OUR HISTORY IS OUR FUTURE

March 11 - April 23, 2022

Virtual Exhibition Opening

Friday, March 11, 2022
at 11:00 AM

Lola Shepard is pleased to announce **OUR HISTORY IS OUR FUTURE**, an online solo exhibition featuring select works on paper, wood panels, and canvas by New York City-based, abstract artist **GARRY GRANT**. This is the artist's second solo exhibition with Lola Shepard. The online exhibition will be viewable to the public on **Friday, March 11, 2022, at 11:00 AM** and will run on the website from March 11 - April 23, 2022.

Highlighting primarily small and large handmade paper works, **OUR HISTORY IS OUR FUTURE** features sixteen works on paper, two works on panel, and a triptych painting, all created by Garry Grant between 2019-2021. Influenced by urban landscapes, the social and political evolution of our culture, and relationships, including the relationship that we have with ourselves, Grant's work is concept-driven rather than narrative. Following in the footsteps of his artistic influences such as Jack Whitten, Sam Gilliam, Mark Rothko, Norman Lewis, and Al Loving, this exhibition demonstrates the artist's skill as a colorist and his inventiveness in experimenting with new materials, textures, and methodologies.

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.

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.

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.

ABOUT GARRY GRANT

Born in Detroit, MI, Garry Grant attended the College for Creative Studies in Detroit, MI, and the American College of Applied Arts in Atlanta, GA, where he studied graphic communication, computer graphics, and fine art. His work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions in New York, 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, followed by several group exhibitions including *Starta Arta*, a new exhibition space in the Flatiron district in New York City. In 2020, Grant was selected to participate in a group exhibition, *Metaphysics of Abstraction*, curated by artist Lamerol Gatewood at the University of Hawaii, Hilo, HI.

Grant is represented by UNREPD Gallery in Los Angeles, a new gallery space focusing on works by African American Artists of Color. In August 2018, his paintings were featured in a solo exhibition at North of History, an art gallery on Manhattan's Upper West Side owned by award-winning architect Gene Kaufman. In October 2017, he was one of six artists featured in *The Detroit Diaspora*, an exhibition curated by Resident Artist Michael Kelly Williams and gallerist Dr. Cledie Taylor. Grant's work is held in private collections throughout the US.

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