

JOHNSON LOWE GALLERY

Press Preview Release:

Cosmo Whyte, *The Sea Urchin Can't Swim: Tales from the Edge of a World*
Fahamu Pecou, *They Didn't Realize We Were Seeds: We The Roses*

On view October 4 – November 23, 2024

Opening Reception: Friday, October 4 from 6:00 to 8:00 pm

Atlanta, Georgia — Johnson Lowe Gallery is pleased to present our inaugural solo exhibitions of Cosmo Whyte and Fahamu Pecou. Opening on October 4th, with a reception from 6-9 pm, and coinciding with the Atlanta Art Fair and Atlanta Art Week, Cosmo Whyte's *The Sea Urchin Can't Swim: Tales from the Edge of a World* and Fahamu Pecou's *They Didn't Realize We Were Seeds: We The Roses*, mark their first presentations with the gallery.

Cosmo Whyte, *The Sea Urchin Can't Swim: Tales from the Edge of a World*

In *The Sea Urchin Can't Swim: Tales from the Edge of a World*, Los Angeles based artist Cosmo Whyte continues his explorations of race, nationalism, and displacement in what ostensibly culminates in a presentation of land and seascapes. Drawing from his archives of personal migration, Caribbean folklore, and historical photographs related to water practices spanning from the 1930's to the present, Whyte interrogates the controversial maritime practice of flags of convenience (FOC). The works on view scrutinize access, privilege, sovereignty, and decolonial nationhood, juxtaposing these historical maritime traditions with contemporary geopolitical dynamics. Through a diverse array of media, encompassing drawings, photography, sculpture, and installation, Whyte articulates the dialectical tensions between the foreign and the domestic, mirroring the liminal spaces of migration and the perpetual evolution of identity formation.



Cosmo Whyte

Fahamu Pecou, *They Didn't Realize We Were Seeds: We The Roses*



Fahamu Pecou

Featuring new paintings, drawings, and sculptures, Fahamu Pecou's exhibition "*They Didn't Realize We Were Seeds: We The Roses*" employs "Afrotropes"—a term coined by Huey Copeland and Krista Thompson, referring to the recurring codes, symbols, aesthetics, and concepts emanating from Black culture—to create encounters with everyday objects transformed and empowered through his meticulous process of recontextualization and cultural reclamation.

Presented across three distinct installations, the exhibition reimagines modern objects as mimetic fetishes, intertwining traditional African spiritual artifacts with contemporary Black cultural symbols. Through a series of drawings, Pecou highlights the Jordan 1 sneaker, illustrating its evolution from a mere basketball shoe to a cultural icon embodying aspiration, hope, triumph, and the transcendent power of flight. His paintings in "REAL

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NEGUS DON'T DIE" employ the graphic t-shirt—often a posthumous tribute to fallen Black icons—to challenge and overturn narratives of death and violence, instead celebrating their enduring legacies. In the vitrinal sculptures of "Louis Knapsack Where I'm Holding all the Work At," Pecou transforms the transparent plastic backpacks, initially designed to monitor Black students, into fashionable objects, thereby addressing themes of racial violence and resilience. This exhibition, Pecou's first gallery presentation in Atlanta since 2011, marks a significant and poignant homecoming for the artist.

Cosmo Whyte

(b. 1982, St. Andrew, Jamaica)

Cosmo Whyte employs drawing, sculpture, and photography to explore the intersections of race, nationalism, and displacement. His large scale drawings pose the celebratory body of Jamaican and diasporic communities in states of jubilation. His figures, adorned with gold leaf and black glitter, defy their colonial past, tearing it from their bodies through unbridled dance.

Whyte received a BFA from Bennington College, a post-baccalaureate at Maryland Institute College of Art, and a MFA from University of Michigan. In 2020 he had solo exhibitions at MOCA Georgia and ICA San Diego. Whyte has exhibited in biennial exhibitions including Prospect.5 New Orleans (2022) 13th Havana Biennial, the Jamaica Biennial

(2017), and the Atlanta Biennial (2016). His work has been included in exhibitions at Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; The High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA; The Drawing Center, New York, NY; The Somerset House, London, UK; Museum of Latin American Art, Los Angeles, CA; Atlanta Contemporary, Atlanta, GA; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, France; and the National Gallery of Jamaica, Kingston, Jamaica. His work is in public museum collections including the High Museum, Atlanta; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; International African American Museum, Charlotte, NC; Museum of Contemporary Art Georgia; National Gallery of Jamaica; and the Pérez Art Museum Miami. In 2022 he joined the UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture as an assistant professor. Whyte lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

Fahamu Pecou

(b. 1975, Brooklyn, New York)

Dr. Fahamu Pecou is an interdisciplinary artist and scholar whose works combine observations on hip-hop, fine art, and popular culture to address concerns around contemporary representations of Black men. Through paintings, performance art, and academic work, Dr. Pecou confronts the performance of Black masculinity and Black identity, challenging and expanding the reading, performance, and expressions of Blackness.

Pecou's work is featured in noted private and public national and international collections including; Smithsonian National Museum of African American Art and Culture, Societe Generale (Paris), Nasher Museum at Duke University, The High Museum of Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Seattle Art Museum, Paul R. Jones Collection, ROC Nation, Clark Atlanta University Art Collection and Museum of Contemporary Art Georgia.

Dr. Pecou recently received the Chevalier de L'Ordre des Arts et Lettres by the country of France (2024). He's one of the recipients of the Louis Comfort Tiffany Award (2022). Pecou was one of 6 artists selected for Emory University's groundbreaking Arts & Social Justice Fellowship (2020). Additionally, Pecou was the Georgia awardee for the South Arts Prize (2020). Dr. Pecou was the subject of a retrospective exhibition "Miroirs de l'Homme" in Paris, France (2017) and a

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recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation "Painters and Sculptors" Award (2016). Dr. Fahamu Pecou has an upcoming exhibition at the Hunter Museum in Chattanooga, Tennessee (2024).

About Johnson Lowe Gallery

Johnson Lowe Gallery champions emerging, mid-career, and established artists from our region and beyond. Our program reveres the transformative power of artistic expression, honoring the profound nature of visual language and its ability to drive personal and societal paradigm shifts.

Founded in 1989 by Bill Lowe, the gallery's extensive exhibition history includes renowned artists such as Thornton Dial, Michael David, Ida Applebroog, Markus Lupertz and Leiko Ikemura. In 2023, the gallery was re-established as Johnson Lowe Gallery under the Direction of Donovan Johnson with *The Alchemists*, a historic exhibition co-curated by Seph Rodney. This exhibition featured works by Sanford Biggers, Mark Bradford, Ebony G. Patterson, Thornton Dial, William Downs, Shanequa Gay, Trenton Doyle Hancock, and many others.

Notes to Editors

Artist: Cosmo Whyte
Title: *Flags of Convenience*
Dates: October 4 – November 23, 2024

Artist: Fahamu Pecou
Title: ~~*They Didn't Realize We Were Seeds: We The Roses*~~
Dates: October 4 – November 23, 2024

Address:
764 Miami Cir NE #210, Atlanta, GA 30324

Hours:
Tuesday – Friday | 10:00 am – 5:30 pm
Saturday | 11:00 am – 5:30 pm
Sunday, Monday, and Evenings by appointment

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