

ROOT DIVISION Presents: *With Open Eyes*
Curated by Adrienne Ramsey



Image info: Maya June Mansour, *Dear Body*, 2022

Exhibition Dates: July 10 - August 3, 2024
Gallery Hours: Wednesday–Saturday 2–6 pm
or by appointment

2nd Saturday Reception:
July 13, 2024 | 7-9 pm
[RSVP here](#)

With Open Eyes is a group exhibition that amplifies Black visual representation through positive depictions of Black culture and life. The exhibition's title derives from the poem "Dream Song 29" (1969) by John Berryman, which was popularized by the television series *Succession* and speaks to opening up our eyes to new views of Blackness. Featuring a lineup of fourteen Black artists - Cynthia Brannvall, Rohan DaCosta, Dana Davenport, Ashara Ekundayo, Eniola Fakile, Miela Foster, Nicole Henton, Gbenga Komolafe, Maya June Mansour, Seraphina Perkins, Raymond Pinto, Michon Sanders, Najee Tobin, and Fulton Leroy Washington (MR. WASH) – their exhibited works redefine notions of Blackness by presenting counternarratives of desire and relief, occasionally utilizing Afrofuturism.

In rejecting oppressive perceptions that are often entangled in Black identity, such as classism, body dysmorphia, sexism, and homophobia, *With Open Eyes* provides a visual understanding of the need to have inclusion, liberation, and equality. The diverse array of works, ranging from installation, photography, painting, and textiles, exemplifies the importance of exploring Blackness, which is candid and complex, in all aspects. Too often when we think of Black art, we are actually imagining depictions

of Black trauma, violence, and death. However, it is important to note that *With Open Eyes* does not pretend as if these stereotypes do not exist. Instead, the artists contemplate contemporary issues surrounding Black identity and representation. Blackness is so often constricted to moments of harm and criminalization, and *With Open Eyes* presents an opportunity for Black artists to gain agency over telling their own stories.

EXHIBITING ARTISTS

Cynthia Brannvall
Rohan DaCosta
Dana Davenport
Ashara Ekundayo
Eniola Fakile
Miela Foster
Nicole Henton
Gbenga Komolafe
Maya June Mansour
Seraphina Perkins
Raymond Pinto
Michon Sanders
Najee Tobin
Fulton Leroy Washington (MR. WASH)

ABOUT ROOT DIVISION

Root Division is a visual arts non-profit in San Francisco that connects creativity and community through a dynamic ecosystem of arts education, exhibitions, and studios. Root Division's mission is to empower artists, foster community service, inspire youth, and enrich the Bay Area through engagement in the visual arts. The organization is a launching pad for artists, a stepping-stone for educators and students, and a bridge for the general public to become involved in the arts.

Root Division is supported in part by a plethora of individual donors and grants from Grants for the Arts, California Arts Council, Walter & Elise Haas Fund, Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation, Kimball Foundation, Fleishhacker Foundation, Redtail Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation, Fred Craves Family Foundation, Violet World Foundation, Deutsche Bank, and Bill Graham Memorial Fund.

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