



CLAIRE OLIVER GALLERY PRESENTS  
*A CONTEMPORARY BLACK MATRIARCHAL LINEAGE IN PRINTMAKING*

The Exhibition Marks the New York Debut for Black Women of Print  
On View January 29 – March 19, 2022



**NEW YORK, NY, January 25, 2022** | [Claire Oliver Gallery](#) is pleased to announce the New York debut exhibition *A Contemporary Black Matriarchal Lineage in Printmaking* features 21 works by nine contemporary Black women printmakers. Curated by two artists, founder of [Black Women of Print](#), Tanekeya Word and founding member Delita Martin, the exhibition explores the depth and breadth of printmaking through the lens of Black women and their myriad narratives.

“Like our foremothers, Black women printmakers have used the tools in our hands to create visual languages that tell the stories of our past, present, future and the in-between spaces within fractal time,” states Tanekeya Word, co-curator, visual artist and printmaker. “Each printmaker shares matriarchal perspectives on Black interiority.”

The exhibition includes work by Tanekeya Word, Delita Martin, Ann Johnson, LaToya M. Hobbs, Lisa Hunt, Karen J. Revis, Chloe Alexander, Sam Vernon and Stephanie Santana.

Tanekeya Word, founder of Black Women of Print and co-curator of this exhibition likens the experimental printmaking techniques depicted within the exhibition as “The Soul Food of the print world.” Hailing from the Mississippi Delta region, Word combines her knowledge and training in the Western art historical canon of linocut printmaking with hand embroidery, quilting and weaving – practices long considered *women’s craft* techniques as a form of artistic intervention that in turn elevate each print into a unique work of art.



Co-curator of the exhibition and founder of [Blackbox Press](#), Delita Martin, uses the power of imagery in her printmaking practice to draw attention to the marginalization of Black women that has historically diminished and distorted their roles with the community and family structures. This misrepresentation has undermined their influence and devalued their contributions. Martin’s current work deals with reconstructing the identity of Black women. Her layering process uses common signs and symbols to create a visual language that draws its viewers in to experience the strength of the women in her work. There is a story in each image that shifts the perspective of these marginalized women. Lush colors and gestural forms are infused with recurring symbols such as birds, masks, circles, and stools that represent spirit, transition, and leadership. Martin’s work is an immersive experience that explores her ancestry and African American roots, bringing forth women that symbolize female power, wisdom, and the infinite.

Ann Johnson uses objects as diverse as an ironing board or a feather fan to deepen and expand upon the narratives formed by printing haunting and thought-provoking images of Black and indigenous women directly onto the objects. The artist questions why we are still having the same conversations surrounding “women’s work,” and equality in a country as imaginative and forward thinking as ours. Born in London but raised in Cheyenne, Wyoming Johnson’s experimental printmaking was inspired by her great grandmother who was a Black Indian. Johnson’s African, Native and African American ancestry play a large role in her work. The works on view are printed on raw cotton and are from the “Auction Block Series” confronting the cross-generational trauma and pain of slavery, as well as the survival and existence of its ancestors.

*A Contemporary Black Matriarchal Lineage in Printmaking* was organized by Black Women of Print to

showcase the work of a spectrum of established and mid-career Black women artists with a focus on printmaking.

**IMAGE CAPTIONS (Left to Right, Top to Bottom):**

Delita Martin, *My Mother's Bowl (self-portrait)*, acrylic, charcoal, etching, gold leaf, hand stitching, 43 x 63 in, 2021

Tanekeya Word, *tender a sisterhood anthem (Bside) fig. 014*, linocut, relief ink, gouache, embroidery on 280 gsm BFK Rives, 22 x 30 in, 2021

Ann Johnson, *Octoroon (Constance)*, intaglio, found objects, 10 x 11 x 10 in, 2021

Chloe Alexander, *Existing in a positively negative space*, charcoal, and pastel on wood lithography matrix, 24 x 24 in, 2021

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**MEDIA CONTACT**

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**ABOUT BLACK WOMEN OF PRINT**

Black Women of Print is an African diaspora centered platform, a digital homeplace for independent, mid-career and established Black women printmakers. The organization serves as a place to support and promote the visibility of Black women printmakers and as a professional member directory of Black women printmakers who practice within the field.

**How We Serve**

- We center the intersectional narratives of Black women printmakers
- Accessible education is at the core of our practice and we provide free digital content, as a culturally relevant teaching tool, to a global audience
- We create critical discourse on past, present and future representations of Black women printmakers for equity in printmaking through digital content, institutional and media partnerships, panels, webinars, art lectures, virtual workshops, annual portfolios and exhibitions.
- Via digital programming, we promote the visibility of Black women printmakers from an emic perspective
- Our members expand their skill level through varied professional development classes and support groups within the organization
- We encourage agency and assist novice printmakers with introductory supplies and mentorship to explore printmaking and ensure a future within the discipline of printmaking.
- We pay homage to the Black women printmakers who came before us and share their scholarship, so that they are not hidden and their practice is expanded through present and future Black women printmakers.

**ABOUT CLAIRE OLIVER GALLERY.**

Claire Oliver Gallery is located in Central Harlem in a four-story brownstone. For nearly 25 years, Claire Oliver Gallery has showcased and celebrated artwork, with a focus on work by women and people of color, which transcends and challenges the traditional art historical canon. Our forward-thinking program and exclusive commitment to the primary market allows for an intensive focus that has nurtured and grown the careers of our artists. Many of the gallery's artists have been included in The Venice Biennale, The Whitney Biennial, and biennales in Sydney, Pittsburgh, and Lyon and have exhibited works in major international museums including the Smithsonian American Art Museum, The Art Institute of Chicago, Center Georges Pompidou, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, and The Los Angeles County Museum of Art amongst others. Claire Oliver Gallery artists are included in the permanent collections of many important museums worldwide including The Smithsonian American

Art Museum, The Art Institute of Chicago, The Tate Britain, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The State Hermitage Museum, MoMA, and the Museum of Arts and Design amongst many others. Claire Oliver Gallery held the first American exhibition for the Russian collaborative AES+F, whose work went on to twice represent Russia in the Russian pavilion of the Venice Biennale. Gallery artists have received prestigious fellowships including Fulbright, Guggenheim, USArtist and National Endowment for the Arts.

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