



Barbara, 2024. Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas. 65 x 49.5 inches. © Sissòn.  
Courtesy of Allouche Gallery. & © Sissòn.



June, 2024. Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas. 65 x 50 inches. © Sissòn.  
Courtesy of Allouche Gallery & © Sissòn.

## SISSÒN

### WAITING TO EXHALE

March 21, 2024 - April 14, 2024 | New York, NY

Allouche Gallery is pleased to present its first solo exhibition of paintings by Sissòn, opening in New York on Thursday, March 21st, with an opening reception from 6-9pm. The exhibition is an exercise in breathing and birthing.

Holding your breath suggests anticipation. But to wait to exhale is so much more loaded. The sensation is one of withholding more than anticipating. You want to dance, but only when you can do so with reckless abandon, without surveillance or interruption, or judgment. You want to live, but only on your terms. A real life, not a half life.

In Sissòn's first solo show with Allouche Gallery, the pregnant space of a breath is explored. Portraits of acrylic on canvas depict Black women in their variance and range. The quiet tension that precedes a revelation swirls through their paintings, all of which center the Black woman. Oxygen is the medium of life, and here serves as a metaphor for the richly varied expressions of Black female interiority. In their sumptuously textured compositions, figures that populate the artist's physical and spiritual lives are frozen perfectly for the viewers benefit. Each static stroke is a gesture of gratitude.

# ALLOUCHE GALLERY



Nina, 2024. Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas. 73 x 77 inches. © Sissón. Courtesy of Allouche Gallery & Sissón.

To be a Black woman is to be perpetually misunderstood, taken for granted, and still the most powerful, beautiful person in the room. How can you live as an oxymoron? Is it the chicken or the egg? Are we reviled for our innate grace? Or are we powerful because of the artificial barriers we constantly disassemble?

The artist's figures look directly at you and you cannot look away. They are living patterns, all that matters in the composition, and what matters most in the life of the artist. *Waiting to Exhale* is a love letter. An attempt at celebrating without mythologizing. A bow to the original birthers. The mothers of humankind, the saints of today, allowing them space to be demons if they so wish, or unremarkable if that suits them better. In the poem *Inhaling*, from which this exhibition takes its title, Barbara Chase-Riboud (herself depicted in the show) asks what:

*"[Is] the difference between  
Racing through life breathless  
And loitering through it  
Waiting to exhale."*

The difference is intention. Intention that can only be reached when we know how we are perceived and what to do with that perception.

- Camille Okhio

# ALLOUCHE GALLERY

## About Sissòn:

(b. 1986) Sissòn is a non-binary, self-taught American artist. Their work reveals and questions the experience and social constructs of race, identity, and power. Born in Los Angeles and raised in Glendale, Arizona, Sissòn began their creative curriculum at age seven under the tutelage of their mother, Kimberlin. When she passed away in 2006, Sissòn abandoned their practice for almost a decade. They returned in 2015, creating work that would form the basis of their first solo show, Ivory Gold Slaves. In addition to their solo endeavors, Sissòn has participated in notable group exhibitions, including those at renowned institutions such as the Contemporary African American Museum in Los Angeles and the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit. They recently had a piece acquired by the Portland Museum of Art as part of their "+ Collection" exhibition.

## About Allouche Gallery:

Established in 2014, Allouche Gallery is home to an international roster of some of the world's most recognized and culturally significant contemporary visual artists. Through its highly curated exhibition program, the gallery has garnered a reputation for highlighting artists whose work directly challenges preconceived notions of contemporary visual culture and affirming their place in 21st Century art. Home to a select group of both established and rising artists across a variety of disciplines, Allouche Gallery represents the work of Felix R. Cid, Ron English, Nick Georgiou, Paul Insect, Michael Reeder, Malik Roberts, Swoon, Hannah Yata, Juan de la Rica and more. Founded by Eric Allouche, Allouche Gallery is one of New York's premiere commercial art galleries and the preeminent exhibitor of contemporary art. For more information about the upcoming show at Allouche Gallery, please visit

[www.allouchegallery.com](http://www.allouchegallery.com)