

ALLOUCHE GALLERY

SISSÒN

WAITING TO EXHALE

MARCH 21ST, 2024

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 judgement. 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.

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



Sissòn
Nina, 2024
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
72 x 76 inches



Sissòn
Yemaja, 2023
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
84 x 60 inches



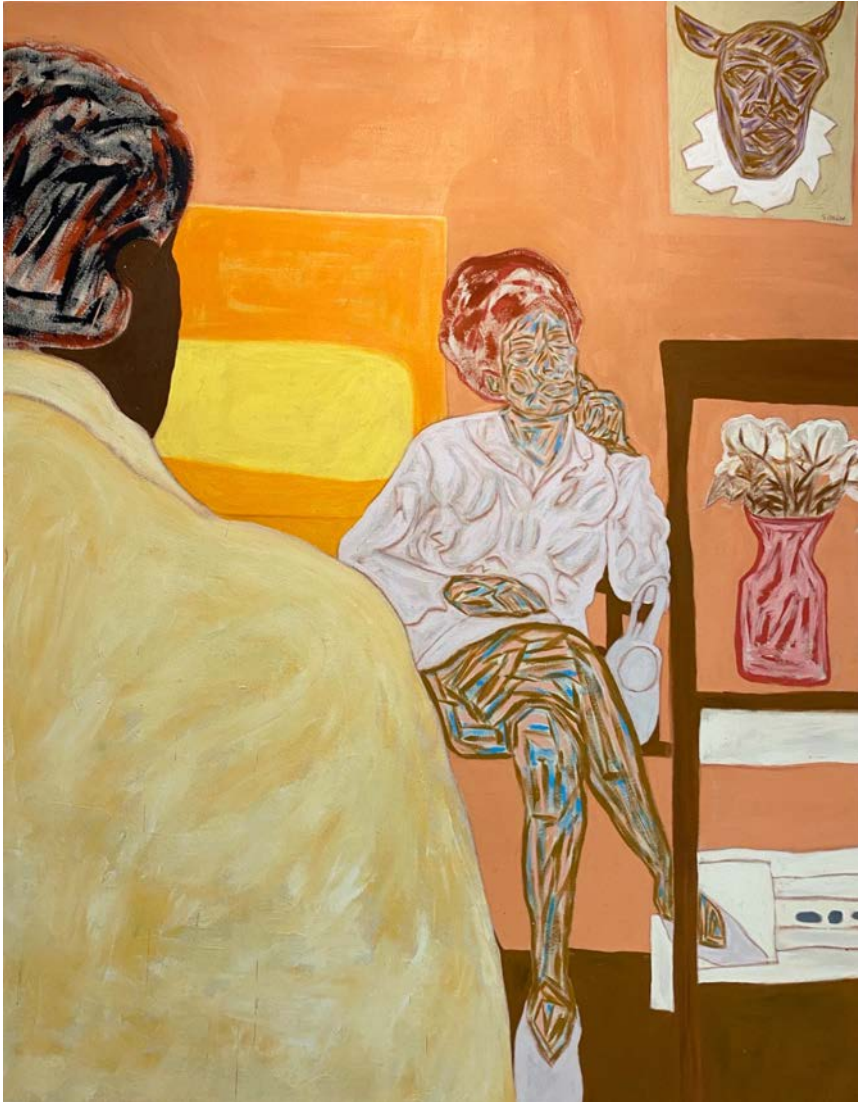
Sissòn
Tiye, 2024
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
68 x 72 inches



Sissòn
Annie, 2024
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
62 x 62 inches



Sissòn
Nana, 2024
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
66 x 50 inches



Sissòn
June, 2024
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
64 x 50 inches



Sissòn
Kara, 2024
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
64 x 50 inches



Sissòn
Selene, 2024
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
64 x 50 inches



Sissòn
Barbara, 2024
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
64 x 48 inches



Sissòn
Kiki, 2023
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
46 x 46 inches



Sissòn
Inà, 2024
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
46 x 46 inches



Sissò
Momma, 2024
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
46 x 46 inches



Sissòn
Oshun, 2024
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
44 x 46 inches



Sissòn
Harriet, 2024
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
46 x 46 inches



Sissòn
Emahoy, 2024
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
44 x 46 inches



Sissòn
Assata, 2024
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
44 x 44 inches



Sissòn
Melody, 2024
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
42 x 33 inches



Sissòn
Alice, 2024
Acrylic and charcoal on cotton canvas
35 x 32 inches