



**Sugar Hill  
Children's Museum  
of Art & Storytelling**



*Ye Qin Zhu, A Myth Made For You, 2021, Mixed media, 46h x 21.50w x 3.50d inches.  
Ye Qin Zhu, Merciful River Body, 2021, Mixed media, 50.50h x 25w x 3.50d inches  
Images courtesy of the artist and SHCMAS.*

FALL 2022 GROUP EXHIBITION

## **COMBINATIONS**

CURATED BY DAMIEN DAVIS and ALAINA SIMONE

**OPENING: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2022**

**Exhibition continues through February 2023**

**New York, NY (September 10, 2022)** – Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling announces their Fall 2022 Group Show COMBINATIONS, featuring artists: Elia Alba, Nicole Awai, Alteronce Gumbly,



Forrest Kirk, Tyrone Mitchell, Sable Elyse Smith, Chris Watts and Ye Qin Zhu, curated by Damien Davis and Alaina Simone. This exhibition runs through Feb 2023.

Through unique multidisciplinary practices, *COMBINATIONS* juxtaposes works by artists who leverage disparate materials, processes and concepts. Through intentionality and material, these artists repurpose what we can do, reinventing limitations and redefining the intended meaning of various mediums and symbols.

Drawing from their personal experiences and the collective experience of being artists that give meaning to objects and ideas, the eight artists are in conversation with each other and the divine idea of humanity as a whole.

Elias Alba inquires into the self and human relationships through her sculptural ritualistic objects, photography and video. Nicole Awai dissects meanings behind words and symbols through her exploration of her identity as a Black Caribbean woman. Through Alteronce Gymby's fluorescent and chromatic spectrum of color, the artist engages with us and expands the notions through which we perceive form and color, subjectivity on identity, materiality on earth and in cosmic space. In tandem, Forrest Kirk's paintings use a variety of media, from oils and acrylics to bubble wrap, fabric and gorilla glue; his images capture the anxiety-inducing power structures in contemporary urban settings.

Multidisciplinary artist Tyrone Mitchell has shown the vast influence of his extensive travels through his integration of various media in his practice, from stone and wood carving, tapestry, installation, performance and objects. Sable Elyse Smith is well-versed in protest art and has been one of the leading artists in wrestling with the thematic concepts of prison reform and social change in her work. Chris Watts interrogates social and personal narratives around embodiment and visibility through his collection of pigments. Finally, Ye Qin Zhu references eastern mythology through his mystical creations; driven by his personal experiences of home-seeking, he is in conversation with the movements of dualities, such as belonging and displacement.

The artists featured in this group exhibition conjoin their unique narratives that speak to history, African diasporic and Eastern culture, mythology, visibility and identity to explore the dualities of humanity and meaning. Through this dissection, they are not only defining but celebrating what it means to be human and exist in a world full of complexity and dichotomies.



## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Elia Alba** (b. 1962) is a Brooklyn-born and Bronx-based multidisciplinary conceptual artist who works in photography, video and sculpture. She received her BA from Hunter College in 1994 and completed the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program in 2001. She has exhibited throughout the United States and abroad, including: The Studio Museum in Harlem, Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Science Museum in London, the Smithsonian American Art Museum in D.C.; El Museo del Barrio in Manhattan, ITAU Cultural Institute in São Paulo, National Museum of Art, Reina Sofía in Madrid, and the 10th Havana Biennial. She is the recipient of numerous awards and residencies, including the Studio Museum in Harlem Artist-in-Residence Program in 1999; New York Foundation for the Arts Grants, Crafts 2002 and Photography 2008; Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant 2002; Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant 2002 and 2008; Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) Workspace Program 2009, and Anonymous Was A Woman Award in 2019. She is currently the Artist-in-Residence at The Andrew Freeman Home and was guest curator for El Museo del Barrio's current exhibition, *Estamos Bien: La Tiernal 20/21*.

**Nicole Awai** (b. 1966) is a Brooklyn-based multimedia artist. She earned her Master's Degree in Multimedia Art from the University of South Florida in 1996. She attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture residency in 1997 and was artist in residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem in 2000. Awai was a featured artist in the 2005 Initial Public Offerings series at the Whitney Museum of American Art and was awarded the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant in 2011 and an Art Matters Grant in 2012. Her work has been included in seminal museum exhibitions including *Greater New York: New Art in New York Now*, at P.S. 1/ MOMA (2000), the *Biennale of Ceramic in Contemporary Art, Italy* (2003), *Open House: Working in Brooklyn* (2004), *Infinite Island: Contemporary Caribbean Art* (2007) both at the Brooklyn Museum; the 2008 *Busan Biennale* in Korea; *The Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA II*, the Getty Foundation Initiative exhibitions *Circles and Circuits I: History and Art of the Chinese Caribbean* at the California African American Museum and *Circles and Circuits II: Contemporary Art of the Chinese Caribbean* at the Chinese American Museum, along with *Relational Undercurrents: Contemporary Art of the Caribbean Archipelago* at the Museum of Latin American Art and the High Line Network exhibition *New Monuments for New Cities*. Awai was a Critic at the Yale School of Art in the Department of Painting and Printmaking from 2009-2015 and is currently faculty in the Department of Art and Art History at the University of Texas at Austin. Awai is represented by Barbara Davis Gallery in Houston, TX.

**Alteronce Gumby** (b. 1985) was born in Harrisburg, PA. He is a multimedia and interdisciplinary artist, his practice consisting of painting, ceramics, installation and performance. Gumby graduated from the Yale School of Art with an MFA in Painting and Printmaking in 2016. He has won notable awards such as the Austrian American Foundation/ Seebacher Prize for Fine Arts and the Robert Reed Memorial Scholarship. Gumby has also participated in numerous international artist residencies such as the Rauschenberg Residency (2019), London Summer Intensive (2016), Summer Academy in Salzburg, Austria (2015), 6Base (2016), and as the 2016 recipient of the Harriet Hale Woolley Scholarship at the Fondation des États-Unis in Paris. Gumby's work has been exhibited at galleries such as Hauser & Wirth, Gladstone Gallery and Camden Arts Centre. His solo exhibition, *The Color of Everything*, of new abstract "tonal paintings" similar works presented in "Combinations" are on view [at Nicola Vassell Gallery in New York City from September 8 - October 22, 2022](#).



**Forrest Kirk** (b. 1975) was born in San Diego, CA and currently lives and works in Los Angeles. He studied at California State University, Los Angeles, and spent a year studying classical painting techniques in an atelier in Paris, France. In 2019, Kirk was a resident at the Bed Stuy Artist Residency, Brooklyn, NY. His work resides in numerous private collections and foundations, as well as in the permanent collection of the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA and Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego. The bold chromatic diversity of Forrest's paintings are achieved using a variety of media ranging from oils and acrylic to bubble wrap, fabric and Gorilla glue. His images often reference psychological uncertainty and anxiety arising from underlying power structures, specifically those experienced in contemporary urban settings.

**Tyrone Mitchell** (b. 1944) is an abstract artist that lives and works in New York City. He received his education from the New York Studio School, New York, NY; Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, Madison, ME and the Art Students League, New York, NY. He has had solo exhibitions at the Bronx Museum of Art, Bronx, NY; Newark Museum, Newark, NJ; Sculpture Center Gallery, New York, NY; and The Bronx Council on the Arts, Bronx, NY, among other notable institutions worldwide. In addition, Mitchell has exhibited in group exhibitions at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY; Howard University, Washington, D.C; The Art Center, South Bend, ID, The Bellevue Art Museum, Bellevue, WA; The Brooks Memorial Gallery, Memphis, TN; The Everson, Museum, Syracuse, NY; Laguna Gloria Art Museum, Austin, TX; the Delaware Museum of Art, Delaware, MA; Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH; MoMA PS1, Long Island, NY; the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; the National Arts Academy, New York, NY; New Museum, New York, NY; Queens Museum, Queens, NY and the Fukui Fine Art Museum Fukui, JP to name a few. His honors, fellowships and commissions include the MacDowell Colony Fellowship, Joan Mitchell Foundation, Lila Wallace, Public Art Fund, John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, The Whitney Museum at Philip Morris, and the New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, among others. Mitchell sees himself as reintegrating the practice of stone and woodcarving into his wheelhouse of tapestry, installation, performance, and discreet objects. In addition, he has taught at Bard College, Hunter College, and the Delhi College of Art in India.

**Sable Elyse Smith** (b. 1986) is a Los Angeles-born and New York-based artist. She received her MFA from Parsons, The New School for Design and her BA from Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, GA. She has held various solo exhibitions across the US and in London. She has participated in a multitude of group exhibitions and screenings: *The Milk of Dreams* at the 59th International Art Exhibition at La Biennale di Venezia, *Whitney Biennial 2022: Quiet as It's Kept* at the Whitney Museum of American Art, *Closer to Life: Drawings and Works on Paper in the Marielouise Hessel Collection* at the Hessel Museum of Art, *Wild Frictions: The Politics and Poetics of Interruption* at the Contemporary Arts Center, *Off the Record* at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, *Grief and Grievance: Art and Mourning in America* at the New Museum, *Making Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration* at MoMA PS1 and more. A solo exhibition by Sable Elyse Smith, [\*Tithe\*](#) is on view at JTTNYC from September 7 - October 21, 2022.

**Chris Watts** (b. 1984 ) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY , NY and Charlotte, North Carolina. He attended the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Wroclaw, Poland; the College of Arts and Architecture, University of North Carolina in Charlotte, North Carolina; and the Yale School of Art, New Haven, Connecticut. He's had solo exhibitions at Monica King Contemporary, New York; Gallery Twenty Two in Charlotte; Artspace Visual Art Center, Raleigh, NC; Genome Gallery, Charlotte, NC and at Davidson College in Davidson, North Carolina. His work was recently included in a group show focused on abstraction at Galerie Lelong, New York, NY. He has held residences across the US and abroad to include the Marek Maria Pienkowski Foundation, Chelm, PL; McColl Center for Art + Innovation,



Charlotte, NC; the Art & Law Fellowship Program at Cornell University Art Architecture Planning, New York, NY; and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Workspace Program, New York, NY. Watt's academic trajectory and art career are featured alongside renowned emerging artists in the critically acclaimed newly released film "[The Art of Making It](#)" by [Kelcey Edwards](#).

**Ye Qin Zhu** (b. 1986) was born in Taishan, China to farmers who met in the factories of Shenzhen city. His family immigrated to NYC in 1990. He grew up in a house with a village-style vegetable garden in the cosmopolitan neighborhood of Sunset Park, Brooklyn. He received his MFA from Yale University in 2020 and his BFA from Cooper Union in 2010. Based in Brooklyn, NY and New Haven, CT, Zhu is an interdisciplinary artist with a wide ranging practice that encompasses painting, public art, and social practice. This past year, Zhu has had a solo exhibition at *Moskowitz Bayse Gallery* in LA, was in group shows at *Harper's Gallery* and *James Fuentes* in NYC, *Galerie Marguo*, Paris, France, designed a billboard at *Kingsgate Project Space* in London, UK, and designed two large-scale public art installations, one in Strafford, NH called *A Universe* and the other in Governors Island, New York titled *CONSTELLATION*. Zhu is on the team that spearheaded the *New Haven COVID-19 Memorial*, working with the city's Department of Cultural Affairs, residents, community and organization leaders to remediate a contaminated land into a healing-garden art-park (recipient of Andrew Mellon Foundation grant). At the heart of Zhu's work is his painting practice. In the studio is where he digs deep to derive his core values, important ones of which are to find authenticity and healing. From there he bridges the discipline of painting to all the other forms.

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## ABOUT THE CURATORS

**Damien Davis** (b. 1984) is the Sugar Hill Children's Museum's Curator-in-Residence. He is a New York-based artist, born in Crowley, Louisiana and raised in Phoenix, Arizona. He holds a BFA in Studio Art and an MA in Visual Arts Administration from New York University. His practice explores historical representations of Blackness by seeking to unpack the visual language of various cultures and question how these societies code/decode representations of race through craft, design and digital modes of production. His work has appeared at The Whitney Museum and Museum of Modern Art, as well as METHOD Gallery in Seattle, and Biagiotti Progetto Arte in Italy. He is the recipient of the Rema Hort Mann Foundation Community Engagement Grant and has been awarded residencies with the Museum of Arts and Design, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, and Pilchuck Glass School. Mr. Davis is also a former fellow and current advisor for the Art & Law Program. His work has been mentioned in the New York Times, Frieze Magazine, The Guardian, Hyperallergic and Vulture. Davis has two solo exhibitions on view "[Made in America](#)" at [Kates-Ferri Projects](#), New York, NY running from September 9- October 5, 2022 and "[Case Studies 1: Damien Davis - OLD CURRENCIES](#)", [Montclair State University, Montclair, New Jersey](#) through December 9, 2022.

**Alaina Simone** lives and works in Harlem, New York. She is the owner and founder of Alaina Simone Incorporated, an art gallery and artist liaison consultancy focused on internationally recognized interdisciplinary emerging and established artists, collections and institutions. She has produced and curated internationally acclaimed exhibitions with corresponding educational programming in the United States and abroad with leading emerging, mid-career and established contemporary artists, including Howardena Pindell, Frank Bowling RA, Ilya and Emilia Kabakov, Ed Clark, Barbara Nessim, Rashaad Newsome, Serkan Ozkaya and David Antonio Cruz, among many others. Her work includes



working with artists' estates, such as the Estates of Merton Simpson, Allan Stone, and James VanDerZee, to name a few. Simone has led activations at international art fairs, including Art Dubai (Dubai, UAE), SPRING/BREAK Art Show (New York, NY), Volta (Basel, CH/New York, NY, Prizm (Miami, FL) and Untitled Art (Miami, FL). She is a founding board member of [Verbier 3-D Sculpture Park and Artist Residency](#) (Verbier, CH). Simone's exhibitions have appeared in leading publications, including The New York Times, Art in America, Modern Painters, Art Forum, ARTnews, Hyperallergic, Artsy, The New Yorker, Whitehot Magazine, Art Newspaper and significant international contemporary art media outlets.<https://www.alainasimone.com>

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## **ABOUT SUGAR HILL CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF ART & STORYTELLING**

Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling, the cultural capstone of the Sugar Hill Development designed by architect Sir David Adjaye OBE, provides our culturally rich neighborhood—home to the Harlem Renaissance—with a space where children and their families grow and learn about Sugar Hill, and about the world at large, through intergenerational dialogue with contemporary artists, art and storytelling. Designed to nurture the curiosity and creative spirit of three- to eight-year-old children, the Museum provides opportunities to grow as both author and audience, as children engage with the work of accomplished artists and storytellers, and create and share their own. The Museum is a separate 501(c)(3) organization founded by and sponsored by BHC. [www.sugarhillmuseum.org](http://www.sugarhillmuseum.org)

### Location & Information

898 St. Nicholas Avenue at 155th Street  
New York, NY 10032  
Ph. 212-335-0004  
Email: [info@sugarhillmuseum.org](mailto:info@sugarhillmuseum.org)  
Open every Saturday. 10:00am - 3:00pm\*\*  
Closed Sunday - Friday\*

### Admission

Children ages 0 to 8	FREE
Youth ages 9 to 17	\$4*
Seniors (65+)	\$4*
Students (with ID)	\$4*
Adults	\$7*

## **ABOUT BROADWAY HOUSING COMMUNITIES**

Since 1983, Broadway Housing Communities has provided permanent homes for thousands of adults, children and families, high quality early childhood programs that improve outcomes for resident and community children, and opportunities for local artists to exhibit their work and engage the community. The success of our model is rooted in community, and a commitment to ensuring that the adults,



children and families we serve receive the support they deserve to live independent, stable lives.  
[www.broadwayhousing.org](http://www.broadwayhousing.org)

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