

DORSEY'S FINE ART GALLERY

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Wilhelmina 'Obatola' Grant-Cooper, *Blue Magic*, 2019, Sculptural Assemblage, 11" x 24"

Alison Kuo, *The Golden Child*, 2024, Sculptural Assemblage, 11" x 22"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Communion of Treasures

Wilhelmina 'Obatola' Grant-Cooper

Alison Kuo

November 3 – December 8, 2024

Opening Reception

Sunday, November 3, 2024

3:00 PM to 6:00 PM

Artist Talk

Sunday, November 10, 2024

3:00 PM to 6:00 PM

Brooklyn, NY—Dorsey's Fine Art Gallery is thrilled to present Wilhelmina 'Obatola' Grant-Cooper and Alison Kuo in a two-artist exhibition, titled "Communion of Treasures," on view November 3 through December 8, 2024. The opening reception is on Sunday, November 3 from 3:00-6:00 pm and the artist talk is on Sunday, November 10 from 3:00-6:00 pm. The artists incorporate objects familiar to their

communities to form sculptural assemblages. Both teachers and community organizers utilize their artistic prowess to communicate knowledge and protect the vulnerable. Not previously being aware of the other's practice, the show creates a container for the two to exchange and share their work.

Grant-Cooper and Kuo are artists, leaders, and caretakers of their communities. Inspired by their personal experiences, Grant-Cooper founded SISTAAH, Inc. (Survivors Inspiring Sisters Through Art and Advocacy for Health) to educate women on early breast cancer detection after her brushes with the disease, and Kuo co-founded Sisters in Self-Defense with author Ava Chin to offer workshops to Asian femmes on self-preservation in response to the rise in anti-Asian hate during the COVID-19 pandemic. Tuned into the rhythms of their communities, the artists often host events and deliver classes in local cultural organizations.

Their community participation is essential to their artistic production. It informs them of the needs and urgencies of the people they care about. The understanding from their embedded participation finds expression in the objects they use in their work. For Grant-Cooper, housewares, musical instruments, and hot combs tell the stories of Black lives. She notes, "My journey of turning discarded everyday objects into art symbolizes renewal and endless possibilities, reflecting my life as a two-time breast cancer survivor for over 30 years." At the same time, "Made-in-China" products in Kuo's works are familiar to Chinatown residents and the wider Asian American diaspora. The specific selection of objects makes these artists' work accessible to their audiences. The show invites communities to come together to gain greater understanding across cultures.

The concepts the artists are investigating overlap as well. Grant-Cooper explores contemporary social concerns, such as urban issues and women's health matters focusing on breast cancer awareness and maternal health, while Kuo dives into the interconnectedness of care between communities of color through her sculptural objecthood. As a Yoruba priest and a martial arts practitioner, respectively, the artists bring both the spiritual and the physical into their work.

Co-curated by Naima Wood, Director of Dorsey's Fine Art Gallery, and independent curator Sophia Ma, "Communion of Treasures" provides an opportunity to see how Grant-Cooper and Kuo utilize art to bridge cultural divides, foster healing, and address pressing social concerns. By molding everyday objects anew, the artists create spaces for dialogue and understanding, reflecting the deep care they have for their communities. When asked about her participation in the show, Kuo says, "The experience of meeting second-generation gallerist Naima Wood and seeing Wilhelmina 'Obatola' Grant-Cooper's dazzling sculptures for the first time was like meeting two art sisters I'd been longing for." This exhibition not only celebrates these artists' unique voices but also encourages viewers to explore the shared human experience through art. Visitors are invited to engage with the works, participate in the exchange of ideas, and discover new perspectives within this cross-cultural dialogue.

Biographies

Wilhelmina 'Obatola' Grant-Cooper is a self-taught, Harlem-based visual artist, art instructor, and author. Grant-Cooper creates assemblages using mixed-media and found objects which she repurposes into visual art. The artist has mounted numerous solo exhibitions in Harlem, Texas, and Alaska, and has participated in group exhibitions at multiple venues throughout New York, the East Coast, and Alabama. Collectors of her artwork include Alice Walker, Bill Clinton, The Heath Gallery, and Hamilton Landmark Galleries.

Grant-Cooper is the founder of SISTAAH, Inc. (Survivors Inspiring Sisters Through Art and Advocacy for Health). This arts-based non-profit organization leads community art projects that inform, encourage, and facilitate access to early detection of breast cancer by connecting the medically underserved to free screening services. Her art instruction led to artist-in-residences at The Ralph Lauren Cancer Center and the Creative Center at University Settlement, where she used art to nurture the creativity of cancer patients, their families, and staff in a public hospital setting.

In 2010, Grant-Cooper was awarded The Black Art Makers Award, The Women's History Month Creative Power of Women Award, and The Alain Locke Art & Action Award. She was also a NoMAA (Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance) 2016 Uptown Arts Stroll Honoree. She's the author of two books, A

Feeling of Fullness: Insights of a Divinely Guided Journey Beyond Breast Cancer (2016, Xlibris Publishing Company) and Uplifting Cancer Survivors in the COVID Era: Expressions of Kindness and Inspiration Between Aunties and Nieces (2022). She can be found guiding elders through art activities at senior centers in Washington Heights, Upper West Side, and Brooklyn.

Alison Kuo is a second-generation immigrant who pursues intersectional relationships across communities through artistic engagement. She is the co-founder of the group Sisters in Self-Defense based in Manhattan's Chinatown along with the writer Ava Chin. She has worked as a teaching artist at the Abrons Art Center, the W.O.W. Project, the Hamilton-Madison House Senior Center, and Think!Chinatown. She has served as faculty in the SVA MFA Fine Arts Program.

Kuo has exhibited her work at Think!Chinatown, the Hessel Museum of Art, Cuchifritos, the Abrons Art Center, Beverly's, CANADA, Happy Family Night Market, Grace Exhibition Space, Marvin Gardens, the Yeh Art Gallery in New York, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts in Massachusetts, the UNTITLED Art Fair, and the Young at Art Museum in Miami. Internationally, her work has been shown in the 4th Overseas Chinese Artists Invitational Exhibition at the He Xiangning Art Museum in Shenzhen, Singapore Arts Week 2022, the 2016 Nanjing International Art Festival, and the MATERIAL art fair in Mexico City. She made site-specific performance works for Paraiso Bajo in Bogotá, and Malagana Macula in Managua. She is a recipient of a Rema Hort Mann Foundation 2020 Artist Community Engagement Grant.

Sophia Ma is an independent curator and writer based in Brooklyn. Ma focuses on broadening the reach and understanding of Asian American artists and the impact of their work on society. The latest development in her research centers on the intersection of Asian American and non-Asian American collaborations since the Civil Rights Movement. She curated exhibitions at Pace University Art Gallery (2024), LaMaMa Galleria (2024), Essex Flowers (2024), Chiquita Room (2023), Think!Chinatown (2023-2024), FiveMyles (2023), Tiger Strikes Asteroid New York (2023), Dr. M. T. Geoffrey Yeh Art Gallery at St. John's University (2023), Walter's at Walter Elwood Museum (2022), SpringBreak Art Show (2020), Hunter College 205 Hudson Gallery (2019), 205 Project Space (2019), and Rockwell Studios (2016). These exhibitions range from solo presentations to projects with over 200 artists to coordinate. She has written for multiple art publications, including The Brooklyn Rail, Art Papers, Hyperallergic, Art Spiel, Arte Fuse, and White Hot Magazine. Ma earned her MA in art history and curatorial studies from Hunter College in 2020 with a thesis on the Californian second-generation Abstract Expressionist painter Bernice Lee Bing's life and work.

About the Gallery

In 1970, Mr. Lawrence P. Dorsey founded Dorsey's Fine Art Gallery, which is now one of the oldest Black-Owned art galleries in New York City. Mr. Dorsey was passionate about giving a voice to artists to ensure that art continues to be an integral part of the community. He created an art haven that has been supporting artists for over 50 years.

The exhibition includes important works selected from Dorsey's permanent collection. Artworks from major artists **Elizabeth Catlett** and **Charles White** are included in the exhibition.

Press Inquiries

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Gallery Hours: Saturdays and Sundays 1:00 to 5:00 PM