

# YOSSI MILO GALLERY

## SHIKEITH



With a complex multidisciplinary practice, **Shikeith** (b. 1989; American) interrogates the sociopolitical structures and histories that oppress the psychological landscapes of marginalized communities. Influenced by his interest in hauntology and spiritual traditions from the African diaspora, Shikeith's artwork both mines and speculates on methodologies of disentangling and reconciliation. His photographs employ magical realist aesthetics, creating elusive compositions challenging gender norms and asking viewers to engage with the invisible forces that shape their perception of the subjects depicted and self.

Shikeith earned a BA in Integrative Arts from the Pennsylvania State University and an MFA from the Yale School of Art, New Haven, CT. His work is in the permanent collections of 21c Museum, Louisville, KY; Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; and the Newark Museum of Art, Newark, NJ among others. Exhibitions include *This was his body/ His body finally his* (2017), MAK Gallery, London, UK; *The Language Must Not Sweat* (2019), Locust Projects, Miami, FL; *Feeling The Spirit In The Dark* (2020), The Mattress Factory Museum of Contemporary Art, Pittsburgh, PA. In 2021, he presented notes towards becoming a spill, a site-specific performance, at the Performa Biennial in New York, NY. He is the recipient of the 2022 Pittsburgh Foundation's Exposure Artist Award in co-fellowship with The Carnegie Museum of Art, 2020 Art Matters Foundation Grant, 2020 Leslie Lohman Museum Artist Fellowship, and 2019 Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant. The artist lives and works in Pittsburgh, PA.

# The New York Times

## What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries Right Now

*Want to see new art in New York this weekend? Start in Chelsea with Shikeith's evocative blown-glass sculptures at Yossi Milo. Then head to the East Village for Walter Pfeiffer's career-spanning survey at the Swiss Institute. And don't miss Ebony G. Patterson's riotously colored collages at Hales New York in SoHo.*

CHELSEA

### Shikeith

Through June 25. Yossi Milo Gallery, 245 10th Avenue, Manhattan.  
212-414-0370; [yossimilo.com](http://yossimilo.com)

There are three sculptures in Shikeith's New York gallery debut, most notably a shoulder-high brown wooden cross, pierced with five peepholes to reveal flickering blue video screens, that gives the show its title, "grace comes violently." There's also a glass balloon, a tipped-over glass head and a delicate glass crib surrounded by hanging orbs, all using a color that this young Pittsburgh-based artist (whose name is pronounced like "shy Keith") calls "haint blue," a reference to the indigo paint that African-American Gullah Geechee people once used to ward off malevolent spirits.

Surrounding these are a series of large photo portraits of Black men, against black backgrounds, in black frames. They're all frankly homoerotic, but sometimes the artist also tilts their nudity, or semi-nudity, in different directions. In one, two men extend their hands over the arching, sweat-beaded torso of a third, possibly blessing or exorcising him. Another shows a tattooed man in a gold chain and do-rag licking his lips. Closing his eyes, he seems at once present and remote, not fully captured by the camera.

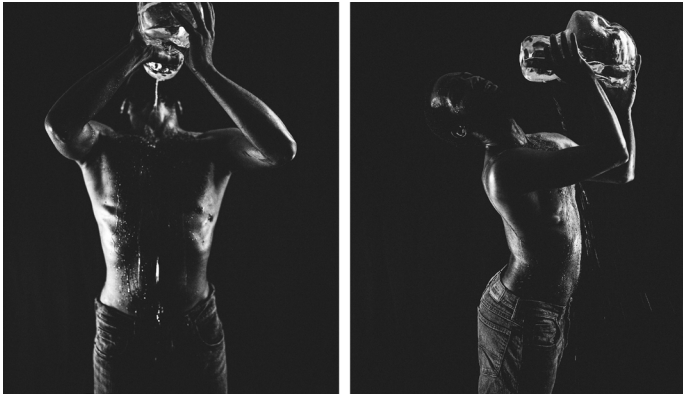
It's the evocative but never overly revealing way Shikeith portions out all this information, his combination of intimacy and inaccessibility, that makes the overall show so memorable. His practice may not yet be fully rooted — I don't know whether "grace comes violently" is a photo show with sculptures, a sculpture show with photos or a single installation — but I'm excited to see where it goes. *WILL HEINRICH*



Shikeith's "grace comes violently" (2022), five-channel video and Plywood, at Yossi Milo Gallery. Shikeith and Yossi Milo Gallery

# ARTFORUM

artguide  
CRITICS' PICKS



**Shikeith, *Feeling the Spirit in the Dark*, 2021**, diptych, ink-jet prints 32 x 66 3/4".

NEW YORK  
**Shikeith**

YOSSI MILO GALLERY  
245 Tenth Avenue  
May 14–June 25, 2022

Grace is the condition of being blessed. It also describes a certain effortless movement: it is meant to come to us with ease. But for his debut exhibition at Yossi Milo Gallery, multidisciplinary artist Shikeith warns us via the show's

title that for Black queer people, “grace comes violently.” The gentle yet tense photographs, sculptures, and five-channel video-cum-sculpture work here redefine this quality of ease and divinity with remarkable power.

For the artist, grace is burdened by the past: like a spirit, it can be imperceptible but everywhere. Shikeith's photographs indicate as much: They are cloaked in chiaroscuro, tainted with the shadows of history that continue to haunt the now. In the photographs *Visiting Hours*, 2022, and *A Clearing*, 2021, figures move in and out of illumination, their vaporous bodies flickering between a visible world and a spectral domain. The past is revived not only in tone, but also in color. Deep blacks and browns are accentuated by “haint blue,” a hue traditionally used by the Gullah-Geechee people of the southeastern coast of the US to ward off evil spirits. The pigment is derived from crushed indigo plants which, when manually cultivated, can leave a long-lasting stain—like memory, or brutality.

Throughout the exhibition, this ghost color is mixed in with the shades of visceral life and resurrection. In a photographic diptych titled *Feeling the Spirit in the Dark*, 2021, the process of cleansing and rebirth is suspended in time and multiplied: Captured at two different angles, a man pours water on himself from a jug as the sole officiant of his own baptism. The regenerative power of water runs throughout the exhibition, where skin is slick with sweat. But this attention to the flesh coincides with a hushed interiority. Eyes—those proverbial windows to the soul—are always closed, downcast, or cropped out. Their inner life eludes our sight but grips us at a level of deep feeling, quietly.

— *Zoë Hopkins*

# i-D



PHOTOGRAPHY | By Miss Rosen | 13 June 2022, 3:00am

## Shikeith's spiritual photographs of Black masculinity

In 'grace comes violently', the artist explores the emotions that haunt queer men from African-American cultures.

From a young age, African-American artist [Shikeith](#) understood the presence of a [spiritual realm](#) coexisting with our own, one that transcended the innate limits of rational thought — and by extension, language itself. But experience teaches us that reality is far greater than what we are taught. Artists understand freedom begins when you step off the path in search of the unknown, for liberation lies in the creation of paradigms as yet untold.

"When I first started making [photographs](#), it was the idea of creating spaces where Black men could tap into the emotional tonalities of their being that have been restricted into one dimensional spaces by way of patriarchal definitions of [masculinity](#)," Shikeith says. "I hadn't really had the full language back then but I knew that it was related to the psychological expression of [Black](#) manhood, which encapsulates the full range of emotions and histories we're entangled in."

Shikeith began to formulate his own visual language during his second year at the Yale School of Art, while making photographs of his friends at a lake. Moved by something profound yet ineffable, he decided to investigate the impact of blue space on the psyche. "The cosmologies of blue and blues have been woven in to African-American culture and [queerness](#) in



"THE ADORATION (NEVER KNEW LOVE LIKE THIS BEFORE)", 2020 ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT ON CANSON INFINITY PLATIN

particular," he says. "I said to myself, 'It would be great as Black men to embody and carry this blue space wherever we go.' I began to develop a language around this psychic blueness, which is a language of liberation for me."

Language, like art, channels the invisible forces that surround us into the physical plane. They are two sides of the same coin, giving form to what has gone unacknowledged, unseen, or misunderstood as an act of reclamation and restoration. With the new exhibition [grace comes violently](#) at Yossi Milo Gallery in New York, and forthcoming publication of his first book, [Notes towards Becoming a Spill \(Aperture\)](#), Shikeith works across photography, installation, film, and sculpture to explore the experiences of queer Black men who have had to fashion a language all their own to explore visibility, representation, desire, and identity.



"HUNTER", 2019 TWO ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINTS ON CANSON INFINITY PLATINE

Continuing in the traditions of Black queer icons like writer [James Baldwin](#), filmmaker [Marlon T. Riggs](#), and poet Essex Hemphill, all of whom have used art as their weapon of choice, Shikeith's practice is rooted in a need to disentangle the specters of racism and homophobia that haunt queer Black men. With *grace comes violently*, Shikeith reminds us that transcendence does not emerge from peace, but from an unstoppable will to confront pain, sorrow, and loss in order to overcome oppression against all odds.

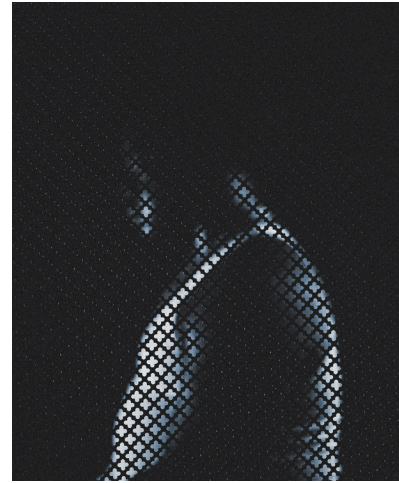
"I've had to deal with a lot of grief in my personal life," he says. "The isolation of being by ourselves because of the pandemic, in that time, there was a lot of self-reflection and wanting to shed many parts of myself that were no longer beneficial to begin again. In my work, I'm always portraying incidents of renewal. Whether I am depicting baptisms or exorcism, I'm thinking about how I can get towards that space of grace."

For Shikeith, the process is non-linear. "It's always this up and down entanglement you have to go through in order to see what's on the other side of what you're dealing with. 'Grace comes violently', which comes from a Greek tragedy, was the perfect saying for what I've always talked about: these ideas of revision, metamorphosis, spilling, this unruly route towards becoming and wanting to embrace that."

Photography, with its singular ability to allow us to literally feel seen, has a transformative effect on

the way we think about ourselves, one another, and the world itself. Buzzwords like “visibility” and “representation” are not the end but rather the start of an on-going process of recognition, empathy, and respect. “The photograph captures the true essence of a person,” Shikeith says. “But the medium also lends itself to other possibilities outside of these direct representations to something that’s more abstract and happening beneath what we see.”

This is the world of the uncanny. You know it when you feel it — the familiar made foreign by something not entirely knowable, something eerie and mysterious yet strangely alluring. It is perhaps a portal into the sublime, into a state of awe and wonder that allows us contact with the divine. For Shikeith, the experience of the uncanny began at his North Philadelphia childhood home, which he shared with a [ghost](#) named Tom. “He raised hell around the house,” he recalls. “He locked my grandmother in the basement for hours at a time. He would knock over Bibles and everything else.”



“SOMETHING THAT COULD NOT BE CONTAINED BY A CONFESSIONAL FAITH”, 2021 ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT ON HAHNEMÜHLE PHOTO RAG PEARL PAPER



“A CLEARING”, 2021 ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT ON HAHNEMÜHLE PHOTO RAG PEARL PAPER

Shikeith's grandmother wasn't new to this. She too had grown up in a house that was haunted and shared those stories with Shikeith and his sister when they were young. “On top of that, my grandmother was a huge fan of [horror](#) cinema — [sci-fi films](#) like *Poltergeist*,” he says. “We heard stories of these encounters with the other world and were getting visuals from watching horror films together. It was very heavy on my imagination as a child, these ideas of ghosts and the rituals you do to get rid of them.”

But, as Shikeith experienced first hand, not all spirits were up to no good. After getting very sick as a child, he remembers his grandmother's mother sitting beside him on the bed, watching over him — even though he had never seen her before. “There was always an understanding of the good and the bad in terms of these encounters,” he says.

Which brings us to “hauntology” — a concept Shikeith created that first took root when he began researching the psychic impact of blue space. In the South, the Gullah Geechee living on the coasts of the Carolinas and Georgia, would create a pigment called haint blue, drawn from the indigo crop grown on plantations where they were enslaved. They painted the ceilings of porches, window frames, and doorframes with this blue to trick ghosts. “They believed that ghosts would mistake this colour for water and would not be able to enter their interior space,” he says.

Shikeith began to think about how art could be used in a similar way, to confront and exorcise the histories of racism and homophobia from the mind, body, and spirit of queer Black men. Working with the same models for over 10 years, he establishes long-term relationships that grow organically with the passage of time. With love, trust, and respect forming the foundation of his work, Shikeith creates a space for vulnerability that goes far beyond the physical realm, the unclothed body being just the start.



BRANDON (HOLDING CLAY), 2020 ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINT ON CANSON INFINITY PLATINE

Shikeith's work is rich, vivid, and crisp — straightforward yet resisting the immediate accessibility of the consumptive gaze baked into the foundation of photography and cinema. Inextricably linked to European colonisation of the globe, photography has been used to subjugate people across the African diaspora for nearly 200 years. We have inherited this language of dangerous ideological beliefs, beginning with objectification being rebranded as "objectivity".



"HUNTER", 2019 TWO ARCHIVAL INKJET PRINTS ON CANSON INFINITY PLATINE

In rejecting these paradigms to create a new way of seeing, Shikeith follows the call of [Toni Morrison](#), who famously said in a speech while accepting the [1993 Nobel Prize in Literature](#), "We die. That may be the meaning of life. But we do language. That may be the measure of our lives."

'[Shikeith: grace comes violently](#)' is on view through 25 June 2022, at Yossi Milo Gallery in New York.

*aperture*

Celebrated for his striking portraiture, the young multimedia artist conjures visions of spirituality, queer presence, and the ghosts of history.

# Shikeith's Black Uncanny

Tiana Reid



APERTURE



The artist Shikeith, born in Philadelphia, in 1989, as Shikeith Cathey, now goes by just his first name. But that does not mean that he is without antecedents, without family, or without history. With interdisciplinary work spanning photography, installation, film, and sculpture, Shikeith's practice is in conversation with a rich canon of Black queer men—the documentary poetics of Marlon T. Riggs, the editorial sensibility of Joseph Beam, the ceremonial politics of Essex Hemphill, and the cutting lucidity of James Baldwin.

While Shikeith's artistic universe addresses a number of masculine literary, musical, and cultural figures, his first universe, if we can call the vexed enmeshments of home a universe, was one of women. "I grew up in a household with my mother and my grandmother," Shikeith told me recently on Zoom. He is from North Philadelphia but now lives and works some three hundred miles west, in Pittsburgh. North Philly, as it is called, is "kind of known for being the more volatile area, the more impoverished area in Philly," Shikeith explains about his upbringing. "It was an environment that had limited resources, a place where, because of that, we had to utilize our imagination a lot as children."

His maternal grandmother was a singer and a poet. "I got a lot of my creative skills from her," he says, noting that she was very spiritual. "Among regular Black shit that people would expect," he adds, hesitating, hers was a very "odd house." He goes on to tell the story of how his childhood home was haunted by ghosts, including one named Tom, who his grandmother would lock in the basement for hours at a time. "Once, the pastor came over to the house, and the ghost took a glass of water and dropped it on the ground," he recalls.

Shikeith's short but active career has been touched by this familial gift: a Black uncanny, an awareness of hauntings, a surreality, a speculative nature. The titles alone

of Shikeith's recent solo exhibitions—*Feeling the Spirit in the Dark* (2020) at the Mattress Factory Museum of Contemporary Art, in Pittsburgh, and *Imagining Flesh Through Shadows* (2019) at the Alexander Brest Museum and Gallery in Jacksonville, Florida—speak to Shikeith's interest in spiritual errancies. His work was also presented in *Ceremonies*, a 2021 online exhibition at the Yossi Milo Gallery, in New York, where he is represented.

The artist's full-color portraits of Black men, from 2020, some of which will be included in a forthcoming monograph published by Aperture, are luscious stagings of the body—a thick black cloak, hands perched over a Bible, a Madonna figure, sweat bubbling up on the surface of skin, do-rags and chains transformed into ornaments—all sparkling under Shikeith's photographic light. In the image *O' my body, make of me always a man who questions!* (2020), a topless man appears to be floating underneath the four summoning hands of two men dressed in pastoral suits. Despite the languor of the clipped body, the way the main subject's back is arched and the muscles around his ribs are protruding also suggests physical tension. A possession. Something clandestine. Shikeith's Black uncanny, his aesthetic unhomeliness, indexes those feelings of strangeness and alienation attached to the intimate and the familiar. Though his work has been canonized in a quicksand of cultural highlights ("Black gay photography") and though there is rescue and relief in his practice, his art does not fit squarely into the optimism sanctioned by much discourse around representation.

Shikeith's ability to balance opulence with sparseness and excess with measure has been honed by a steady flow of commercial commissions. A few years after graduating, in 2010, from Pennsylvania State University with a BA in integrative arts (an interdisciplinary degree that aims to blend the creative and the professional), he moved to New Haven, Connecticut, earning, in 2018, an MFA in sculpture from the Yale School of Art. Since then,

Shikeith has been a frequent contributor to the *New York Times*, where he has photographed a number of subjects including a *T Magazine* fall fashion cover, the models Samuel Atewogboye and Mohamed Cisse for a spread on spring suits, and an exuberant cover for *The New York Times Magazine* featuring Lil Nas X to accompany Jazmine Hughes's profile of the electric Black gay pop star for a 2021 cover dubbed "Hot Boy Summer." Whether the images are fashion editorial or commercial portraiture, Shikeith says: "I think about them as extensions of my fine-art practice, meaning that I'm wanting to embark on assignments that contribute to a larger archive of material that I'm creating." He adds, "When I first began making photographs in high school, I primarily focused on fashion because I was inspired by Tyra Banks's *America's Next Top Model*. That was literally the reason why I picked up a camera in the first place. So, it's really nice to be able to come back around years later and contribute my own visual vernacular to the fashion landscape."

When Shikeith and I connected in October, his work life was a little hectic, particularly leading up to the Performa Biennial, in New York, where he showed *notes towards becoming a spill*, a commissioned, four-act "experimental opera" that blends modern dance and gospel songs. Shikeith and his crew spent the week before the two-night presentation prepping at a "residency" at the Rockaway Hotel in Queens. As did his film *A Drop of Sun Under the Earth* (2017) before it, *notes towards becoming a spill* evokes the writings of Audre Lorde. "I am essentially creating a biomythography that talks about the process of disentangling oneself from a lot of the ephemeral presences that continue to haunt Black queer men—particularly those that are connected to racism and homophobia," he tells me a few days before the Performa debut. "It's going to be set against the Atlantic Ocean in Rockaway Beach."

It is rather revealing that Shikeith says the opera is set "against" the Atlantic, and not on, with, or beside the ocean. *Against* signals

opposition. For Shikeith, the water is both a model of boundlessness and spillage and a history of terror and ruination. In a video created to promote and contextualize the Performa Biennial commission, he talks about the Middle Passage as a site of devastation but also one of escape, referencing the enslaved jumping overboard, sometimes en masse: "This word *spill*—which, for me represents a sort of freedom, a way of existing unpoliced and not constrained to the confines of any one particular forum—is very queer, a queer shape."

In Shikeith's photography, sculpture, and installation, we also bear witness to the psychic life of sexual subjection—what it means to be looked at, the subtle traumas of being perceived despite the elation of mutual recognition. In his video installations such as *to bathe a mirror* (2018) and *#Blackmendream* (2014), choreography and documentary performance narrate Black queer masculinities and desires. The opera, then, is an occasion for an altogether new sensorial experience: the smell of the salty ocean, the twentypiece gospel choir led by Rashad McPherson, the movement of the dancers choreographed by Morgan Bobrow-Williams, their sheer costumes by Carlos Soto. One of the seeds Shikeith planted for the opera was a 2019 installation of the same name at Atlanta Contemporary, which used materials including paint, soil, mud, and audio recordings. "In that installation, I painted the room haint blue, which is a particular shade of blue that I use in my work. It comes from the Gullah Geechee who live along the coasts of the Carolinas and Georgia, the Low Country," he says. "They created this shade from the indigo crop, using the paint to protect their interior space with the blue color of water to ward off evil energies from entering. They believed that haint blue was ghost tricking. Ghosts can't cross water."

*Haint* is one letter away from *haunt*. And *blue* one letter away from *blues*. Connecting these two ideas—blue and hauntings—is key to experiencing Shikeith's artistic practice. In a 1983 interview with the scholar Nellie Y. McKay,

Toni Morrison, speaking on the heterogeneity of styles (plural) of Black art and Black literature, diagnosed a sign of the times: “Some young people don’t want to acknowledge this [supernatural element] as a way of life. They don’t want to hark back to those embarrassing days when we were associated with ‘haints’ and superstitions. They want to get as far as possible into the scientific world.” Perhaps this has changed since the early 1980s, and Shikeith is one example of an artist who invites the ghostly in, who acknowledges what has been left behind, what lingers, what is unknowable.

The opera, oceanic and spiritual, marks a turning point in Shikeith’s career as he actively tries to renew his established practice. Shikeith is best known for formal portraiture, crisp images of Black figures executed with conceptual clarity, but his perspective is an intense, enveloping, and often experimental style. In *The moment you doubt whether you can fly, you cease forever to be able to do it* (2014), which you might have seen as the cover of Danez Smith’s 2017 National Book Award Finalist *Don’t Call Us Dead*, two Black men are in flight, hands linked, reaching and floating away on a black balloon. “I think [Shikeith’s work] speaks to innocence, to vulnerability, to healing, and to friendship and love in a way that is super beautiful, and also super bare, and literally naked, without reaching toward a hypersexualized view,” Smith told *Gulf Stream Magazine*. “There are so many penises and they never feel sexualized, they feel vulnerable.”

Shikeith’s recent work, he says, attempts to obscure what was previously more readily available. “I don’t want things to be so easily consumed anymore,” he explains. “I want to withhold.” He juxtaposes his own photographs with archival images of Black men that he sources from an antique shop in Pittsburgh and from eBay. “I would seek out images that felt very queer or at least were depicting Black men in very intimate encounters.” Where the queerness of some of these photographs lies, of course, is complex, if it can be located at all. But they are queered

through Shikeith’s arrangement and attention. “I lay them out like they’re family photographs in my house, so they’re just chilling on the mantels,” he says. “And people are like, That’s your grandpa? No—just the things that I’ve collected and want to cherish because they were out there sort of lost.” In his grandmother’s home, there were so many images of loved ones, family, extended family, ancestors, plastered all around the house. “I grew up in a home where photographs were stacked everywhere, not an inch left of space,” he remembers.

Still, it would be oversimplifying to mark Shikeith’s new direction using archival images as a clear-cut distinction to identify what came before as easy to digest. After all, since early on, some of his subjects have refused the capture of the photographic gaze. In *Kris* (2019), the figure is subtly slumped over, head bowed down, eyes closed, glistening with sweat. In *A Missed Prayer* (2017), two Black men embrace. In the foreground, the man is turned away so that the viewer can see only the back of his head, his ears, the nape of his neck, his shoulders. “Only God Can Judge Me” is splayed in large cursive lettering from his left to right shoulder. But behind him, a man crouches, sitting knees to chest, peering over, hiding but valiantly confronting the camera’s gaze. In *Brush your Blues* (2017), the back of two heads, necks intertwined, almost form the shape of a heart. And in the forty-four-minute documentary film, *#Blackmendream*, nine men speak—about a range of issues including anti-Blackness, masculinity, and emotions—with their backs to the camera. About a minute in, white typewriter-style lettering appears on a black screen, reading: “This work expresses my, and our, apprehension to be.”

With Shikeith’s distinctive noble vividness—clean edges, detailed visual contrasts, a confrontation, averted gaze, backs turned—a complexity emerges, marked by a deepening relationship between the photographer and the photographed. His approach begins with composition through

sketching but extends well beyond the time of the sitting. “For the most part, the people in my photographs are people I’ve photographed for years, since 2012 and forward,” he says. “I’m really interested in this progression. I change as an artist; they change as individuals. The one big goal in my head: to capture these people over time.”

Perhaps, then, Shikeith’s portraits are also self-portraits of a man whose eyes keep fluttering, whose self is irretrievable, troubling the distinction between who you’re really taking a picture of when you take a picture of someone else. He fashions a corpus saturated with liquid relation. As depicted across his oeuvre, spill threatens to undo any “us” that has formed. Desire spreads like ripples. Intimacy crashes like waves. History is already here. History haunts. Mixing ghosts and oceans, he constructs a way of making art that intensifies that one-letter difference between *haint* and *haunt*, between *blue* and *blues*. Ghosts are both welcome and in need of warding off.

These past two years, Shikeith’s life has been like the ocean—nothing constant but the ebbs and flows. “I am just surrendering to my life and not letting the Capricorn in me try to control everything,” he says, laughing. At the beginning of the pandemic, he lost the grandmother who had taught him so much about art and spirituality. Amid grief, he is also trying to prioritize fun and openness—eating, dating, unfamiliar experiences. “I just want to follow a feeling,” he states. And we’re all following him now.

Art

# The Artsy Vanguard 2021: Shikeith

• Nicole Martinez Dec 1, 2021 8:00am

Shikeith occupies multiple aesthetic realms at once. Working across film, photography, sculpture, and installation, the visual artist presents work that is edgy, yet sensitive to unspoken truths about identity, transformation, trauma and healing. Shikeith explores complex feelings in a relatable way, building off his experience as a queer Black man. Perhaps that's why he's able to reach people who may not otherwise see themselves as consumers or appreciators of art; his work encourages vulnerability and a deep connection to his subjects' emotional worlds.

When I reached Shikeith over the phone at the end of September, the Pittsburgh-based artist had just taken a break from rehearsing for his experimental opera, *notes towards becoming a spill* (2021), on New York City's Lower East Side. His week in the city had been productive: Shikeith rehearsed the choreography while the production's costume designer, Carlos Soto, sketched his ideas as the dancers writhed on the wooden dance floor. For *notes*, a work about personal transformation, the dancers practice fluid *rond de jambes* that abruptly halt and shift to jerking movements; Rashad McPherson's score equally delivers an eerie fever-pitch and Gospel-inspired vocals. The opera, which debuted in Rockaway Beach in October as part of the Performa 2021 Biennial, is Shikeith's first foray into performance art.

"[I've] never worked in performance," he said. "But I feel like what I've done lends itself to this kind of medium."

If you've been following this visionary young artist's hurtle toward success, you might argue that just about every medium serves Shikeith's message. Interested in revealing the layered complexities lived by queer Black men, Shikeith deftly navigates between mediums to create provocative and immersive works of art. Dreamy, sensual, and emotionally charged, Shikeith's oeuvre mines his personal experiences, and cycles through a metamorphic process of life, death, and rebirth.

Shikeith connects deeply with "a collective experience among queer Black men," he explained. His work creates a vernacular for the sort of processional healing he hopes his community is inching toward. In works such as the film installation



Portrait of Shikeith, 2021. Courtesy of Shikeith.

*To Bathe a Mirror* (2018), as well as the photographic series that inspired notes, one can witness that journey. Allegorical threads like bodies of water and the color blue tap into the psychic experiences of Black people, their generational traumas and their ancestral histories; while evocative photographs of Black men unveil the pressures and stereotypes weighing them down.

Just as he weaves his way through mediums to formulate his ideas, Shikeith similarly traverses between commercial work and conceptual practice. In the last two years alone, Shikeith has presented in solo and group exhibitions around the country, including the Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh; Yossi Milo Gallery, in New York, which represents him; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas; and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles (the last of which acquired his photographic work, *Hunter*, 2019). At the same time, he has regularly photographed editorial campaigns for *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*. During our interview, Shikeith speaks thoughtfully about his career path and runaway success, equally humble and proud of what he's managed to achieve as someone who nearly didn't pursue a career in art.



**Shikeith**

O' my body, make of me always a man who questions!,  
2020

Yossi Milo Gallery

US\$15,000



**Shikeith**

to bathe a mirror, 2018

Yossi Milo Gallery

US\$19,000

“I’m able to keep experimenting with all these fields that I have worked up to,” he said. “I feel really excited about that.”

Inclined to create since childhood—Shikeith’s grandmother was a poet and a singer, and his paternal grandparents were photographers and archivists—Shikeith developed a fascination with the camera in high school, inspired by the Tyra Banks-helmed reality show *America’s Next Top Model*. But as the first person to attend college in his family, he initially intended to become a plastic surgeon when he enrolled at Penn State University. Fortunately, a high school counselor sent him to intern at a creative agency before starting his freshman year, refocusing his career toward fashion photography and advertising.

After college, Shikeith landed a gig as a photo editor at *People StyleWatch* magazine but felt restless. “I started to want to use the camera to talk about personal things that I didn’t have enough confidence to talk about,” he said. “I had an urgency to wonder if other young, queer Black men from urban communities were experiencing the same things.”

Shikeith created a body of work that featured Black men on the edge of disaster. Moody, black-and-white images of his subjects saw them teetering on the edge of a roof or in ruined buildings, but there was a quality about the way they were posed and photographed that suggested emotional liberation. A friend encouraged the artist to apply for a grant through the Heinz Endowments, and, successful in his application, he created *#Blackmendream* (2014). The documentary project, which included interviews from Black men about their experiences and emotional worlds, went viral and became the platform from which Shikeith developed his artistic interests.

“[The video] was released in December 2014 and within a year I was showing at other galleries, [and participating in] lectures and talks at universities,” he said. “It was a quick whirlwind off this initial body of work.”



**Shikeith**  
*To Be Held*, 2021  
Yossi Milo Gallery  
Contact for price



**Shikeith**  
*Throat*, 2021  
Morán Morán  
Contact for price



**Shikeith**  
*The Adoration (never knew love like this before)*, 2020  
Yossi Milo Gallery  
Contact for price



**Shikeith**  
*Haint Blue Balloon*, 2021  
Yossi Milo Gallery  
Contact for price

But it was his time at Yale University, where he earned his MFA, that honed Shikeith's art-making practice. While he still leans heavily into personal narrative, Shikeith's work is driven by research that involves site visits to specific bodies of water or ancestral homes, as well as lengthy internet searches. And where his early bodies of work tended toward the figurative, Shikeith today is increasingly leaning toward post-minimalist abstraction, without sacrificing his initial instincts. Organic materials like wood, water, glass, and gases double as aesthetic props loaded with meaning for their shape-shifting qualities.

His show "Feeling the Spirit in the Dark," which he presented at the Mattress Factory in 2020, was a meditative chamber that showcases this evolution. Viewers stepped onto a wooden plank hovering over water, with a haint blue neon lighting the otherwise dark room. Shikeith describes the light as an amulet that "wards off ghosts and evil spirits," while the water simultaneously "symbolizes [...] purification (baptism) and the horrors and racial terror inflicted upon enslaved Africans during the forced voyage across the Atlantic (Middle Passage)."





**Shikeith**  
*Michael*, 2020  
Yossi Milo Gallery  
Contact for price



**Shikeith**  
*Black Balloon III*, 2021  
Yossi Milo Gallery  
Contact for price

Now, *notes toward becoming a spill*, which evolved from a photo series to an installation and now, an opera, similarly illustrates Shikeith's interest in personal transformation. With the performers outfitted in flowing blue garments, and their movements displaying a kind of metamorphosis, Shikeith alludes to the personal evolution he believes is underway for queer Black men and the Black community as a whole.

For Shikeith, making this work is an act of love, a gift to those like him who have struggled and found a way to break through. "[I'm] creating ruptures in these worlds around us [that] have started to constrain us...I'm mixing and meshing and conjuring a magical recipe every time and seeing what occurs" he said. "There is always this revision and metamorphosis happening."

For Shikeith, making this work is an act of love, a gift to those like him who have struggled and found a way to break through. "[I'm] creating ruptures in these worlds around us [that] have started to constrain us...I'm mixing and meshing and conjuring a magical recipe every time and seeing what occurs" he said. "There is always this revision and metamorphosis happening."



**Shikeith**

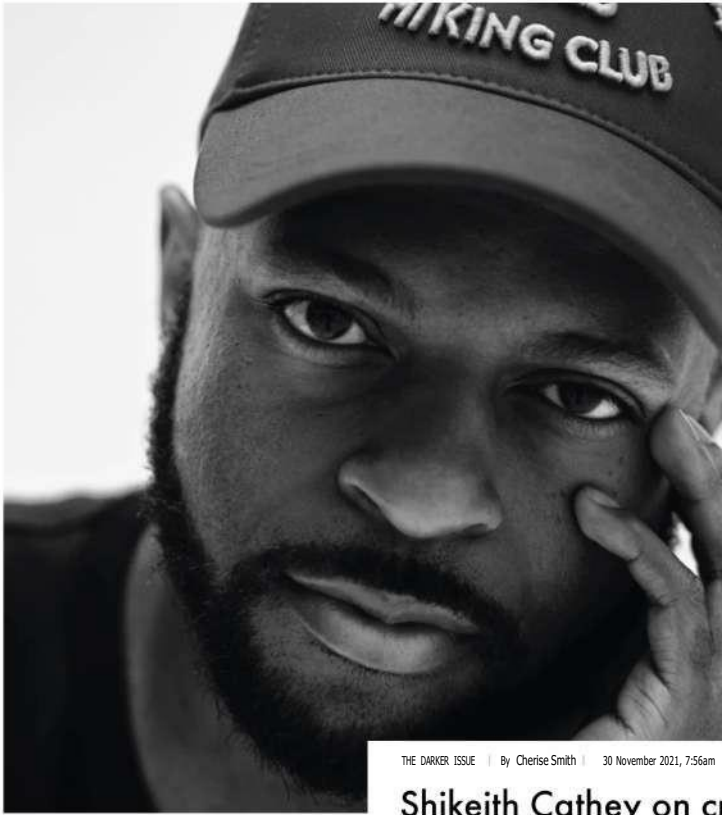
*Now I lay me down to sleep, 2020*

Yossi Milo Gallery

Contact for price

## The Artsy Vanguard 2021

The Artsy Vanguard is our annual feature recognizing the most promising artists working today. This fourth edition of The Artsy Vanguard is a triumphant new chapter, as we present an in-person exhibition in Miami featuring the 20 artists' works, including many available to collect on Artsy. Curated by Erin Jenoa Gilbert, sponsored by MNTN, and generously supported by Mana Public Arts, the show is located at 555 NW 24th Street, Miami, and is open to the public from December 2nd through 5th, 12–6 p.m.



THE DARKER ISSUE | By Cherise Smith | 30 November 2021, 7:56am

## Shikeith Cathey on creating closeness in a socially-distanced world

The artist talks to us about self-care, crafting intimacy and his new experimental opera on the psychic wounds that haunt black men.

Shikeith is an artist whose work investigates black masculinity and psychology via sculpture, film, photography, and installation. He was born, lives and works in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He has exhibited across America, and in 2020, he was awarded the Art Matters Foundation Grant and was selected for the 2020 – 2021 Leslie Lohman Museum Artist Fellowship.

Tell me about the exhibitions that you have participated in over the last year and a half.

At the start of the pandemic, I was going into my first exhibition, a large scale installation exhibition, which was at the Mattress Factory Museum in Pittsburgh, entitled Feeling The Spirit In The Dark. That was in 2020. And then also following that, I had another show at CAM in California, and I created a large installation for that group exhibition. Then, I had another show that was slated to be a group exhibition at MoCA Cleveland, but ended up being a solo show, because it was delayed due to the pandemic. Everything was back to back, and so I had three large scale installations that I created over the course of the last eighteen months.

It was pretty wild to do that kind of work. Those are the biggest installations that I've made. And they all happened while everything was going on in the world, but I will say that it was a great test for me as an artist to think more intimately about how I create space. I try to create these spaces that the audience can immerse themselves in, but now there are all these regulations about what we can touch and how we can be in the same space together. It made me realise that the core of my work is about creating closeness and intimacy.

Against social distancing, right?

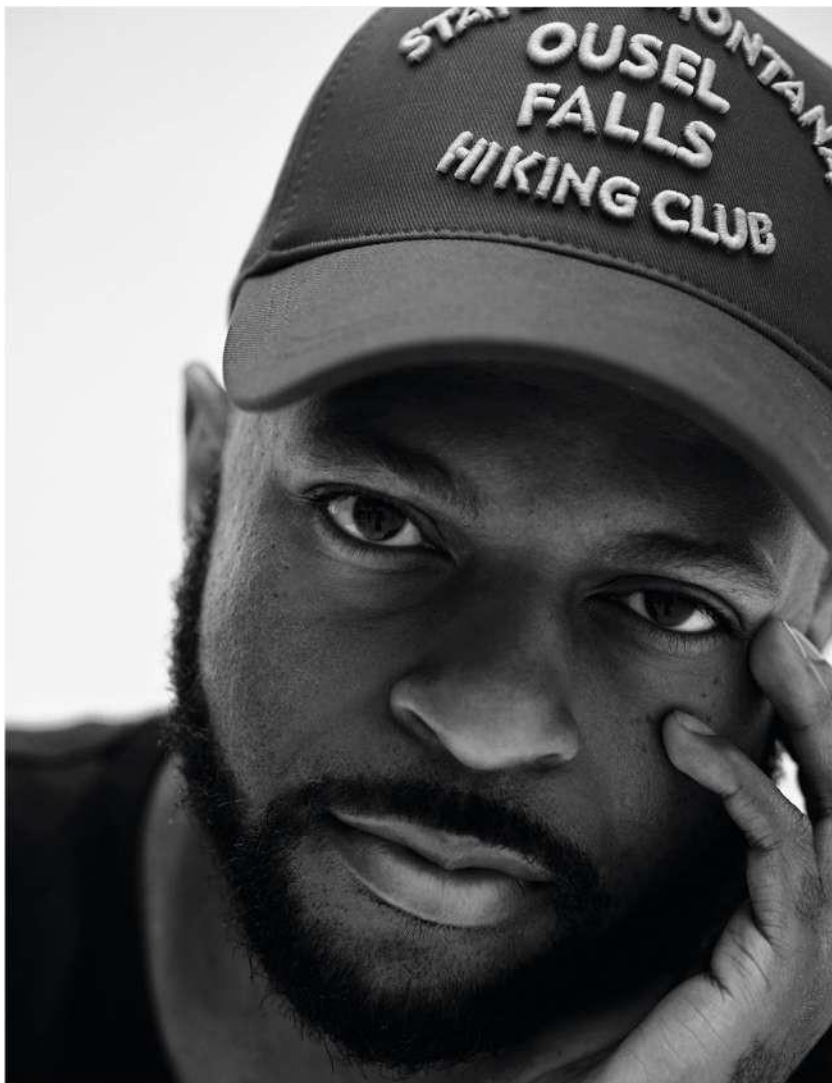
I had to really reorganise how I thought. The spaces became a lot more meditative and allowed audiences to go within themselves more, which in the end, thanks to the pandemic, I think was super beneficial.

So has your way of making your work changed during the pandemic? Have you been in the studio a lot?

When the pandemic began I was in the midst of creating this series of portraits that required travelling, and it also meant that I would be engaging with people who were not necessarily people I had been around before. It was an intergenerational cast of people, so I had to really restructure my studio to be able to invite people in. But on another level, the isolation of the pandemic in itself made me go inside myself, and think a lot more about being alone, about yearning for intimacy and wanting closeness again with others.

That sounds beautiful.

I just began to write a lot more in my studio, too. And a lot of the language related back to these desires, of wanting again, to be next to someone and also the troubles that I would have from being alone. Part of being isolated was a kind of madness. I would start to spiral a little bit just from being by myself. But the art in itself, - that was produced during that period, or at least is coming out of that period - sparked the shift further away from the representational into a more of an abstracted figuration - where things become a lot more muted and hard to see.



SHIKEITH WEARS T-SHIRT CDLP. HAT MODEL'S OWN.

One thing that you have touched on a couple of times that I want to ask you about is: how are you taking care of yourself during what's still a really challenging time? And what are you doing to find solace?

I had neglected a lot of self-care practices for a very long time, but then I was also trying to navigate towards a peace that wasn't really authentic. Over the course of the past year, I have started talking to a counsellor, which is something that I've never really done. Considering a lot of my work is dealing with this psychological landscape, that was something that I had avoided, but had always allowed the art to be a pull toward this release or cathartic experience. For me personally as an artist, I do prefer to communicate through this visual art, but it's nice to be able to regain a voice. And I'm able to be proud of myself for taking those steps.

Well, let me congratulate you. I know, at least in the black community in which I was raised, going to therapy was not something that you did. And it's something I firmly believe in, so good for you for taking those steps, and prioritising your emotional and psychological wellbeing and hygiene.

What I do is cook.

Okay.

I learned how to cook from my grandmother who passed away right at the start of the pandemic. I watched my grandmother and my mom cook in the kitchen, and it's one of my favourite things to do. I'll make a big pot of greens, or fry some chicken, and just have it there for just the process of it all, but that's something that I really just enjoy doing to de-stress and think to myself. I'm from North Philly, so when I was coming up every Sunday, and I know this to be true for a lot of different black communities, Sunday is when you went to church and came home. Then, everybody got together and we'd eat, but in my family - even though my family was a Christian household - we didn't necessarily go to church. It was always just creating that kind of space for ourselves. On Sunday morning we would clean. My mom would put on the music, and my grandmother and my mom would be cooking in the kitchen. And so, I think that practice is something that I've carried on into my own home because of how it made me feel; it still makes me feel good to do that. It's good for the soul. You know?

Is there something that you've recently acquired - art, or an object, or even a subscription that you are loving right now?

I like to purchase photographs from eBay. I tapped into this black queer archive of found photographs that had ended up on somebody's eBay storefront, and I've been able to connect the dots with all of these men. I uploaded one of the photographs to Instagram, and the guy in the image saw them and then he found me. Then he contacted me, and gave me the backstory. It was all from this black gay retreat in the 90s. He lived here in Brooklyn, where I've been for the past few months while working on Performa. We're going to have lunch together really soon.

Tell me a bit about Performa and what they might be able to look forward to, as it's about to begin.

I'm creating an experimental opera entitled *Notes Towards Becoming A Spill*, which gets its title from an installation that I created, and it's also the title of a body of my photography. It's a cast of twenty singers and five dancers. I'm going to be narrating. It's about the dancing black male body and the process of becoming and untangling one's self from some of the psychic wounds that continue to haunt black men. I'm very excited about it. I hope people come.



THIS WAS HIS BODY/HIS BODY FINALLY HIS, 2017, PLASTER, INDIAN INK, ARTWORK  
© SHIKEITH

# frieze

## Shikeith Exorcises The Histories That Haunt Black Queer Men

The artist speaks about his latest show at the Mattress Factory Museum, which merges installation and live performance, the sacred and the profane

M BY MIA IMANI HARRISON IN INTERVIEWS | 21 JAN 21

The line between pleasure and pain, sacred and profane is thin for Black queer men. In his latest show at Pittsburgh's Mattress Factory Museum, 'Feeling The Spirit In The Dark', Pittsburgh-based conceptual artist Shikeith traverses this line in work that considers the afterlife of slavery and the many ways Black queer, male-embodied people are haunted by intergenerational trauma.

The show's four installations, which explore the psychological impact of light, darkness, touch, and space on the Black body and soul, will host performances by musicians Rashad McPherson, Corey Stagers and Trapcry on 21 January and 11 February. Both Shikeith's immersive environments and the work of his collaborators trace the history of Black people through music by sampling blues, jazz, gospel, and R&B, and examine the ways the echoes of the Middle Passage still reverberate within the Black collective consciousness.

**Mia Imani** The Black church is an undercurrent throughout the entire project. What is your relationship to the Black church?

**Shikeith** This work in particular is really engaged with sacred space and how sacred space is constructed within Black households. I come from a deeply religious Christian family. My grandmother, who I was raised with, always kept a Bible at the end of the stairs. Right outside of my childhood bedroom was a portrait of Jesus. So there was always the presence of the Black church within my house, especially the sound of gospel music, but then also music that might be considered secular, like Mary J. Blige and Lauryn Hill.

**MI** How did you come up with the concept for 'Feeling The Spirit In The Dark'? What made you want to include live performance?



**S** The show advances my construction of 'blue spaces,' site-specific installations interrogating the interior worlds of Black men, particularly my own. The show takes its name from a 1998 text by [E. Patrick Johnson](#) in which the author writes about how Black gay men move from place to space because they feel constrained within the Black church, but then also seek out another establishment for themselves. A lot of that movement happens underground, in the dark, where they could experience a sense of liberation, a sense they bury beneath their feelings about the church. As someone who identifies with that, I wanted to locate an erotic potential through the construction of these spaces for Black queer men.

**MI** This project feels as much like an act of spiritual cleansing as an exhibition. Throughout the show, and especially within the installation *Feeling The Spirit In The Dark*, blue as a color, a type of music (blues), an emotion, and a body of water flood the rooms. How do colour and sound play a role in exorcising traumas within the installations?



**S** My earlier work dealt with the psychological landscape of Black manhood. I wanted to figure out how, through visual art, I could repossess Black male sexuality. Our bodies are haunted by the aftereffects of slavery, such as racism and homophobia. I wanted to create a form around that experience that didn't rely on direct representation, and stumbled across this idea of 'Blue space' in my research. Bodies of water, for instance: as we know, Black people have a fraught relationship with bodies of water, particularly the Atlantic, from the Middle Passage. Bodies of water have also been a refuge for us, like the swamps on the escape routes of the Underground Railroad. Sonically, the blues played a huge role in how Black queer people have expressed themselves, thinking particularly of Kokomo Arnold, Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith.

**MI** History plays a key role in this project, in works like *The Beauty of Recovering What Has Been Lost* (2020). In that work, Black pain and potential are embodied by seven glass penis lanterns suspended from the ceiling in the formation of the Big Dipper constellation, a nod to the ways Black folk would use the stars to navigate north via the Underground Railroad. Which elements of the Black cultural archive helped you develop these works?

**S** In his book *On Black Men* (2000), David Mariott writes about how the Black male psyche gets wound up in racial trauma, and the psychic wounds continue to haunt us and impact the way that we see one another and see ourselves. In works like *The Beauty of Recovering What Has Been Lost*, for instance, I'm thinking about lynchings, in which castration was common. The Black male penis was the most prized thing you could retrieve from the scene. I'm also thinking of Louis Agassiz's daguerreotypes of slaves and other archival images of the Black male body that are profoundly affecting.

**MI** Many of your works in the project, especially *Altar (Held After)*, which explores the relationship between the gloryhole and the church confessional, oscillate between two opposing states – such as sacred and profane – and in turn create a third reality between them. What do these liminal spaces represent to you.

**S** It's something that I attach a lot of wonder to. There's a space of indeterminacy that I'm really after. A space that is unfixed from a destination. In that lack of fixity, an erotic or liberatory space can arise. Black people have always had to resist stasis, which I'm also trying to do through these oscillations. It's from that resistance to stasis that our radical potentiality has so often emerged.

**MI** 'Feeling The Spirit in the Dark' incorporates immaterial traditions of Black art, such as music and performance, with material traditions most closely associated with academic art, like minimalist sculpture and painting. How does the interplay of these mediums allow you to touch on different elements of Blackness?

**S** One of my professors at Yale, the incredible scholar Rizvana Bradley, once said that 'Blackness exceeds representation.' I'm trying to create geometric abstraction while layering on minimalism and light art, but, you know, throwing some flavour on it. I think it's allowed me to touch on the plasticity of Blackness.

**MI** How did Rashad McPherson, Trapcry and Corey Staggers get involved in the project?

**S** Collaboration is a huge part of my practice. Corey is a saxophonist who I met during my time at Yale. Trap is someone who collaborated with on the sound production across all of my installations. Rashad is someone whose music I was listening to during the conceptualizing of 'Feeling The Spirit In The Dark'. It's an honour to be able to allow them to activate this installation through their individual performances, because I do feel like the installation is a sacred space.





# YOSSI MILO GALLERY

## SHIKEITH

b. 1989, Philadelphia, PA; lives and works in Pittsburgh, PA

### EDUCATION

- 2018 MFA, Yale University, New Haven, CT
- 2010 BFA, The Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA

### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 grace comes violently, Yossi Milo Gallery, New York, NY
- 2020 Feeling the Spirit in The Dark, The Mattress Factory Museum of Contemporary Art, Pittsburgh, PA  
Ceremonies, Yossi Milo Gallery, New York [online]
- 2019 Rude / Emergencies, Ltd Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA  
Imagining Flesh Through Shadows, Alexander Brest Museum & Gallery, Jacksonville University, Jacksonville, FL  
The Language Must Not Sweat, Locust Projects, Miami, FL  
notes towards becoming a spill, Atlanta Contemporary, Atlanta, GA
- 2017 This was his body / His body finally his, MAK Gallery, London, UK  
Somewhere over the \_\_\_, Bunker Projects, Pittsburgh, PA

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2023 Full and Pure: Body, Materiality, Gender, Green Family Art Foundation, Dallas, TX  
Behind Abstract Forms, Fragment, New York, NY
- 2022 Invisible Thread, The Baker Museum, Naples, FL  
When I State that I am an Anarchist, PLATO Ostrava, Czech Republic
- 2021 Fetiche, Morán Morán Gallery, Mexico City, MX  
The Skin I Live In, Lyles & King, New York, NY  
This Is the Day, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR  
Recent Acquisitions, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA  
notes towards becoming a spill, Performa 2021 Biennial, New York, NY  
Inspired: Coda, Redbull Arts, Detroit, MI  
A Beautiful America, Museum Dhondt – Dhaenens, Sint-Martens-Latem, Belgium
- 2020 Imagine Otherwise, Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, Cleveland, OH  
Enunciated Life, California African American Museum, Los Angeles, CA  
The National, Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Fort Wayne, IN  
Inspired: Overture, Redbull Center for The Arts, Detroit, MI
- 2019 From the Margins, Gallery 102 at the Corcoran School of Art & Design, Washington, DC  
Ebsploitation, Martos Gallery, New York, NY
- 2018 Familiar Boundaries. Infinite Possibilities, August Wilson Center, Pittsburgh, PA  
Block Party, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, Brooklyn, NY  
The Way We Live, Aperture Summer Open, Aperture Foundation, New York, NY  
Ultra Vivid Dreaming, Blue Sky Gallery, Portland, OR  
Countervisuality, Art Gallery at Bellevue College, Bellevue, WA  
Kaleidoscope, Kravets Wehby Gallery, New York, NY  
Twenty Ears, MFA Thesis Show, Yale School of Art, New Haven, CT
- 2017 Say It Loud: Art, History, Rebellion, Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit, MI  
Open Video Call, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, PA  
Brotha, The Overlook Place, Chicago, IL  
Girls Who Are Boys, Who Like Boys To Be Girls, Verein Nachtschicht, Basel, Switzerland
- 2016 Labor Relations, Wroclaw Contemporary Museum, Wroclaw, Poland  
Go Tell It: Civil Rights Photography, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA

# YOSSI MILO GALLERY

Black Joy, Yale School of Art, New Haven, CT  
Looking Through: Photography, Race, & Identity, Adelphi University, Garden City, NY

## SELECTED AWARDS & GRANTS

- 2023 Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program Awardee
- 2022 The Pittsburgh Foundation Exposure Artist Fellowship
- 2020 Art Matters Foundation Grant  
The Leslie Lohman Artist Fellowship
- 2019 The Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grants  
Investing in Professional Artist Grant, The Pittsburgh Foundation
- 2018 The Advancing Black Art Grant, The Pittsburgh Foundation & The Heinz Endowments
- 2017 The Afro-American Cultural Center Award for Excellence in The Arts, Yale University
- 2016 Interdisciplinary Arts Awards, Center for Collaborative Arts and Media, Yale University  
Student Wellness Grant, Yale University  
The Advancing Black Art Grant, The Pittsburgh Foundation & The Heinz Endowments
- 2013 The Advancing Black Art Grant, The Pittsburgh Foundation & The Heinz Endowments
- 2010 University Artist Award, The Pennsylvania State University
- 2009 Leslie P. Greenhill Photography Scholarship, The Pennsylvania State University

## SELECTED COLLECTIONS

- Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD
- Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA
- Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA
- Jule Collins Smith Museum, Auburn, AL
- Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX
- Newark Museum of Art, Newark, NJ
- Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence, RI
- Vermeire-Notebaert Collection, Sint-Martens-Latem, Belgium
- Wrocław Contemporary Museum, Wrocław, Poland
- 21c Museum, Louisville, KY

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Adjunct Professor, Carnegie Mellon University School of Art, Pittsburgh, PA
- Teaching Assistant, Yale University School of Art, New Haven, CT

## SELECTED FILM FESTIVALS

- 2022 Visite Film Festival, Antwerp, Belgium
- 2018 Black Star Film Festival, Philadelphia, PA  
In My Skin:Black Queer Shorts, Wexner Center For the Arts, Columbus, OH  
Short Films Program, Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL  
Rio Festival de Género & Seexualidade no Cinema, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil  
BFI Flare, British Film Institute, London, UK  
Inside Out LGBTQ Film Festival, TIFF, Toronto, CA  
CinemAfrica Film Festival, Stockholm, Sweden
- 2017 GLITCH Film Festival, Scotland, England

## RESIDENCIES

- 2020 Mattress Factory Museum of Contemporary Art, Pittsburgh, PA
- 2019 Alpha Lab Gear, Pittsburgh, PA
- 2018 Long Road Projects, Jacksonville, FL
- 2016 Pittsburgh Glass Center, Pittsburgh, PA
- 2014 Bunker Projects, Pittsburgh, PA  
-2018

## PUBLIC PROGRAMS

# YOSSI MILO GALLERY

- 2021 Aperture Conversations: Antwaun Sargent, Shikeith, and Naima Green on Black Queer Utopia, Aperture, New York, NY [online]
- 2019 Race, Sex, & Cinema: The World of Marlon Riggs, BAM Brooklyn, NY
- 2018 Studio Teens Lecture and Workshop, Studio Museum of Harlem, NY
- 2017 An Evening with Shikeith and Rickey Laurentiis, MoMA, The Museum of Modern Art, NY  
Art, Power, Protest: Northwestern Conference on Human Rights, Northwestern University  
#Blackmendream, Screening and Discussion, The Philadelphia Art Museum, Philadelphia, PA
- 2016 Photography and The Politics of Representation, The Vera List Center and Aperture Foundation, New York, NY  
Women Take the Reel Film Festival, The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, MA  
#Blackmendream, Morehouse College, Atlanta, GA
- 2015 Brothas gonna work it out, University of Texas at Austin, TX  
My People Film Series, Kelly Strayhorn Theater, Pittsburgh, PA

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Mulgrew, Sophie, and Winchell, Haley. "Black History Month: Shikeith" [Musée Magazine](#) February 9, 2022
- 2022 Conner, Allison Noelle. "Opacity and the Spill: The Photographs of Clifford Prince King, Shikeith, and Paul Mpagi Sepuya" [Contemporary Art Review Los Angeles](#) November 2022  
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Rosen, Miss. "Shikeith's spiritual photographs of Black masculinity" [Vice](#) 13 June 2022  
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Shikeith & Crawley, Ashon T. [Shikeith: Notes towards Becoming a Spill](#), Aperture Foundation, June 2022 [book]
- Reid, Tiana. "Shikeith's Black Uncanny." [Aperture Magazine](#) Spring 2022
- 2021 "8 LGBTQIA+ Artists on Self-Portraiture and Expressions of Pride." [Artsy Editorial](#), 8 June 2021  
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- 2020 Sargent, Antwaun. "The Queer Black Artists Building Worlds of Desire." [Aperture](#) 8 December 2020  
Soldi, Rafael. "Q&A: Shikeith." [Strange Fire](#) 12 November 2020  
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- 2016 Sargent, Antwaun. "3 Photographers Expose Race in America c. 2016." [Vice](#) 29 February, 2016
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