



BLACKNESS REIMAGINED GLITTERS DURING THE ECC'S PERSONAL STRUCTURES, REFLECTIONS

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It's a toss-up on what you notice first upon entering ***The Afro-Futurist Manifesto: Blackness Reimagined***, the magnificent Murano glass chandelier illuminating the gallery or the black walls. But then, the art! The art catches your eye, and everything, even the room shifts.

M. Scott Johnson's sculptures of Black folk hero **High John de Conqueror (2009)** set upon black plinths, grounds the space with the permanence of his materials; **Tawny Chatmon's** gold-leafed portraits and frames literally added to the glow of the space, giving us a 21st century reimagining of renaissance art; You are compelled by the vibrancy of **Arvie Smith's *Preach It (2021)***, inspired by ancient mythology, yet telling a uniquely modern Black story; **Felandus Thames** delivers a message that could have come from the future – "*More than life interested me so that I dare to knock at the door of the cosmos,*" and burnt into hairbrushes no less; The gaze of the subject in **Delita Martin's** work, ***Visionary (2021)*** was rendered in shades of blue I'm certain can only be seen from outside the atmosphere. In my head I heard, 'he's got the whole world in his hands'; In contrast, **Larry Cook's** photograph '***On the Other Side of Landscape Series #9 (2021)***, proffered a barren but hopeful landscape, a prison yard freed of prisoners; Baltimore native **Monica Ikegwu** showcased her mastery of color in the piece ***We Outside (2021)*** while allowing us to glimpse the inner lives of Black millennials. **Morel Doucet's** work ***After All that, We Still Stand (Where Black Lives, Look Blue #3) (2022)*** injected that despite adversity, hope springs eternal.

Baltimore-based **Galerie Myrtis** was invited to exhibit in the **European Culture Centre (ECC)**, 6th edition of the biennale contemporary art exhibition, under the theme **Personal Structures**. Personal Structures' 200 participants are from all corners of the world and expressed their views on the main theme of this year's exhibition: the concept of reflections. The exhibition continues through November 27, 2022

Pigment International™ felt the weight of history that ***The Afro-Futurist Manifesto: Blackness Reimagined*** carried and marveled at the graceful way in which curator **Myrtis Bedolla** bore the load. When we learned this morning that Lee Sharrock included ***Blackness Reimagined*** as "**Eight of the Best Collateral Events - 59th Venice Biennale,**" it was not a surprise.

Bedolla's self-described goal was to "envelope the audience in blackness." And she did just that. Located in an imposing terra cotta building just off the historic **Rialto Bridge**, the oldest of the four bridges spanning Venice's Grand Canal cast even more magic over the event.



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The exhibition was a family affair, the very best Black Family Reunion ever. Chatmon's children, who are regularly featured in her work, were in attendance with her husband and a young friend in tow. Martin was joined by her husband, although her son, now in college and couldn't attend; the M. Scott Johnson clan were triumphant upon entering the gallery. Bedolla was joined by her husband, sons, sister and daughters-in law. Arvie Smith was delayed but at the time of this posting has arrived in Venice. With confirmed obligations including teaching, Cook, Doucet, Ikegwu, and Thames will visit later this summer.

So much more to say about this show, and we will in a special section we will be delivering later this year. It will include in depth interviews with the artists and curator. Interested in advertising? Please e-mail us at pigmentintl@gmail.com.

This Biennale has shifted the conversation, but more importantly perceptions, and as **Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.**, famously said "A mind that is stretched by new experience can never go back to its old dimensions."