
In Celebration of Juneteenth, Acclaimed Yale MFA Visionary Artist, Pop A. Mr. E Sol'Sax, unveils exhibition highlighting cultural connections between African American and African Cultural Heritage



Brooklyn, NY, June 1st, 2023 - The Bishop Gallery is proud to announce the upcoming solo exhibition, “The Sol’Sain’t’Sway: Illuminating Cultural Connections”, featuring the multidisciplinary works of Guggenheim Fellowship recipient Pop A. Mr. E. Sol’Sax. The exhibition will open its doors on June 15th, accompanied by an opening reception from 6-8pm. This captivating collection showcases Sol’Sax’s modern ancestral masquerade characters, paying homage to the African cultural heritage and its integral role in the African American fight for freedom.

Over 30 years ago, Sol’Sax embarked on the creation of “The Sol’Sain’t’Sway,” drawing inspiration from the Yoruba traditional masquerade known as “Egungun” which symbolizes both ancestral spirits and hidden strength. Each character in this series emerged from clever wordplay, reflecting the rich tradition of oral puns used Bantu ancestral celebrations. Through Dadaist photomontage techniques, Sol’Sax seamlessly integrates traditional African masks and sculptures into historical portraits of cultural heroes. By synchronizing the figures of African

American history with Bantu artifacts and dOrisha symbolism, Sol'Sax weaves a tapestry that encompasses visual symbolism and verbal puns. For example, in the piece "Sol'Sain't Surely Jus Sum Rules And Regulations Are The Problem: For Yemaya nad Shirley Chisolm," a digitally collaged image features Shirley Chisolm adorned with an ivory mask depicting Idia The Queen Mother from the medieval Benin empire. Sol'Sax skillfully highlights the contributions of Chisolm, India, and the Yoruba deity Yemaya, all of whom fought against oppression and drew inspiration from the forces of nature.

Sol'Sax's artistic vision ingeniously illuminates the profound cultural links between African American lives and traditional Bantu cultures in Africa. By employing the term "Dada" to reference these photomontages, Sol'Sax goes beyond its association with the European art movement. "Dada" also pays homage to a 15th-century prince named Dada from the Oyo empire in Nigeria, renowned for achieving cultural triumph through peaceful means rather than violence. This resonates with the spirit of African American cultural soldiers celebrated in Sol'Sax's "The Sol'Sain't'Sway", who resisted the violence of European supremacy by harnessing the power of the arts. This connection aligns with the anti-war principles of both the European Dada movement and the original Dada of the Oyo Empire.

"The Sol'Sain't'Sway: Illuminating Cultural Connections" marks a significant milestone as it showcases the work of a black Yale MFA graduate from Brooklyn in a Brooklyn gallery exhibit, an occasion that has been long overdue. Pop A. Mr. E. Sol'Sax, with over a decade of experience organizing Juneteenth Jubilee exhibitions, invites visitors to experience this profound and thought-provoking exhibition. "The Sol'Sain't'Sway: Illuminating Cultural Connections", it promises to captivate art enthusiasts and cultural connoisseurs alike.

Pop A. Mr. E Sol'Sax (b. 1969) Sol'Sax was born in Kings County Hospital in 1969. He earned a BFA with honors from Cooper Union in 1992 and a MFA with honors from Yale School of Art in 1995. Since 1991 the artist has been developing an American ancestral masquerade based on The West African ancestral mas-querade called Egun gun. Sol'Sax's masqueraders are called "Sol'Sain't" to celebrate the souls that ain't here no more but live on because of The African cultural retentions they used to resist European supremacist beliefs. Sol'Sax's work seeks to celebrate The West and Central African cultural contributions that are often overlooked but are deeply rooted in the African American fight for Freedom. Sol'Sax received a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in Sculpture in 2004. In 2005 he received a Guggenheim Fellowship in Sculpture. In 2008 he completed a public commission for MTA arts for transit at The Halsey Street J train station in Bushwick.

Pop A. Mr. E Sol'Sax

The Sol'Sain't'Sway: Illuminating Cultural Connections

Opening Reception: Thursday, June 15th, 6-8pm

630 Flushing Ave Brooklyn, New York

The Bishop Gallery is a contemporary art gallery located in Bedford Stuyvesant, Brooklyn. Launched in 2012 by Erwin John and Stevenson Dunn, Jr. The Bishop Gallery provides emerging and established artists with a platform to connect with a global audience and the historic Brooklyn art scene. By embracing varying cultures, genres, backgrounds, and means of artistic expression, the gallery has forged lasting relationships with their artists and its surrounding communities. The Bishop Gallery strategically uses art as a catalyst for bringing together communities and inciting conversations of change and development.