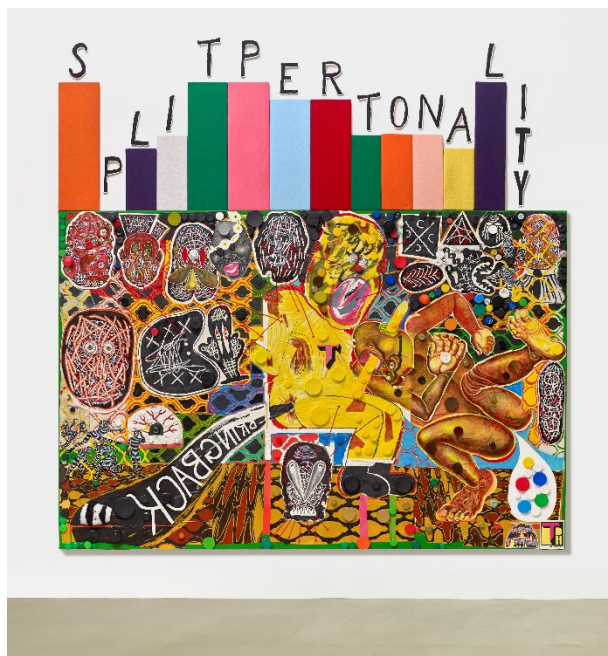


Atlanta's Bill Lowe Gallery relaunches as Johnson Lowe Gallery with new group show *The Alchemists*, Co-curated by Seph Rodney, PhD

March 3 – April 29, 2023

"This is the only concern of the artist: to recreate out of the disorder of life that order which is art."
— James Baldwin



L-R: Trenton Doyle Hancock, *Split Per Tonality*, 2016, acrylic and mixed media on canvas, courtesy the artist and James Cohan Gallery; Shoshanna Weinberger, *Dislocated*, 2021, ink and gouache on paper, courtesy the artist and Johnson Lowe Gallery

(Atlanta) — Bill Lowe Gallery, located in Atlanta's Miami Circle, announces a rebrand as Johnson Lowe Gallery under the new leadership of Donovan Johnson, previously co-director at the gallery. The re-establishment follows the legacy of Founding Director Bill Lowe, who passed in 2021, and coincides with the launch of a comprehensive exhibition schedule and potential off-site projects and programming in Atlanta, championing Atlanta-based and international artists.

Future programming includes *Sleeping Giants*, affirming the importance of previously overlooked artists, including Herbert Creecy, Thornton Dial, and Sam Glankoff (May – June), *Ilidio Candja Candja & Navin Norling* (July – August) from Africa and the United States, respectively, drawing on the parallels and differences within the Black experience globally, and *In Unity as in Division* (September – November), a multi-expo group show highlighting new perspectives in practices of seven Atlanta-based artists.

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Co-curated by art critic and curator Seph Rodney and gallery director Donovan Johnson, new programming commences with a group show, *The Alchemists* (March 3 – April 29, 2023), featuring works by twenty-eight artists constructing new forms of expression rooted in the Black experience and ancestral legacies. Participating artists include:

Sanford Biggers, Mark Bradford, Layo Bright, Danielle Deadwyler, DARNstudio, Thornton Dial, William Downs, Leonardo Drew, Rico Gatson, Shanequa Gay, Todd Gray, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Lyle Ashton Harris, Ashanté Kindle, Michi Meko, Shervone Neckles, Masela Nkolo, Navin Norling, Masud Olufani, Yaw Owusu, Ebony G. Patterson, Ato Ribeiro, Devan Shimoyama, Renée Stout, Felandus Thames, Shoshanna Weinberger, Cosmo Whyte, and Brenna Youngblood.

Johnson Lowe Gallery has long been interested in the creative process of constructing, reimagining, appropriating, and rendering source materials, both natural and artificial, into unanticipated forms akin to the ancient alchemical quest for longevity and immortality. Referencing cinema, literature, and music, the exhibition underscores how alchemy has long been a part of the Black experience and, thus, part of Black artistic practice. For example, witness how via hip-hop, jazz, and of course, the blues – musical genres built upon woe and misery – artists have generated excellence from the worst of conditions.

This museum quality exhibition positions a group of internationally renowned artists together to reflect on the transmutation of the Black experience and ancestral legacy. Featuring works across a wide range of materials – painting, video, collage, assemblage, and installation – *The Alchemists* acts as a critical platform for the exploration of ideologies concerning what it means to be Black and the celebration of Black material culture, traditions, and collective identity, which are often undervalued and ignored in mass culture. Ultimately, this show demonstrates that changing, altering, and transforming our current reality remains possible through aesthetic exploration.

Johnson comments, “I am excited to continue the legacy of one of Atlanta’s long-standing galleries, ushering in a new era while remaining authentic to an established ethos. The gallery’s philosophical architecture is built upon a reverence for the alchemical nature of artistic expression, and it is a great honor to bring together some of the most renowned artists in our gallery – with the brilliant partnership between me and Seph Rodney – for the ambitious elements of our new program, *The Alchemists*. From Lyle Ashton Harris to Ebony G. Patterson, amongst others, the exhibition emphasizes our vision to celebrate the profoundly spiritual nature of visual language and the role it can play in personal and societal paradigm shifts while firmly establishing our ongoing commitment to international facing, critically engaged programming celebrating Atlanta and beyond.”

Rodney adds, “The curious thing about the Medieval European version of alchemy, which consisted of several related projects – among them the transmutation of ‘base metals’ such as lead into ‘noble metals’ particularly gold, the formulation of a potion that could guarantee immortality and the development of panaceas able to cure a wide range disease – is that they all failed. But we can look to Black artists of the United States in the 20th and 21st centuries to find real, lived models of people taking debased and

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quotidian materials and making objects that breathe life back into our culture and, perhaps, see into the future.”

The Alchemists will be on view from March 3 to April 29, 2023.

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About Donovan Johnson

Donovan Johnson is the Co-Owner and Director of Johnson Lowe Gallery.

Johnson has a decade of experience in world-class contemporary art galleries, working at Lisa Cooley in New York, as well as Hathaway Contemporary and Bill Lowe Gallery in Atlanta, collaborating closely with the latter’s founder Bill Lowe as his Assistant Director, overseeing sales, marketing, artist relations, and operations before becoming the Director in 2021. He has experience in art curation and collection management; notably, he has curated shows such as Michael David’s *The Mirror Stage* & Jimmy O’Neal’s *About Now: An Introspective*, presented at Bill Lowe Gallery.

About Mati Gibbs

Mati Gibbs is the Assistant Director of Johnson Lowe Gallery. Hailing from Augusta, GA, by way of New York and London, Mati Gibbs earned her Bachelor’s Degree in Art History from the College of Charleston in 2017 and her Master’s in Art Business from Sotheby’s Institute of Art in 2018. In her previous appointment as Assistant Director of US Operations for Pontone Gallery London, she expanded global recognition by cultivating artist relations, harnessing digital platforms, managing art fair participation, and facilitating sales and acquisitions, ultimately supervising the opening of a satellite gallery space in the United States.

About Johnson Lowe Gallery

Johnson Lowe Gallery is devoted to championing emerging, mid-career, and established artists from diverse cultural backgrounds. The gallery’s program is built upon a reverence for the alchemical nature of artistic expression, with the intention to honor the profound nature of visual language and the role it can play in affecting paradigm shifts at both personal and societal levels.

Johnson Lowe Gallery is committed to presenting work across all media, including but not limited to painting, sculpture, installation, and photography. Alongside a commitment to support and foster the Atlanta arts community, our curatorial and programming initiatives aim to facilitate cross-cultural and global dialogues.

The gallery was founded in the summer of 1989 in Atlanta, Georgia, by Bill Lowe. Longtime artists in the gallery program include Thornton Dial, Michael David, Todd Murphy, Jimmy O’Neal, and Kathleen Morris. The gallery’s exhibition history includes internationally renowned artists such as Ida Applebroug, Markus Lupertz, Dale Chihuly, Hiro Yamagata, and Lieko Ikemura.

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Notes to Editors

Title: *The Alchemists*

Dates: March 3 – April 29, 2023

Address: 764 Miami Cir NE #210, Atlanta, GA 30324

Hours:

Tuesday – Friday | 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM

Saturday | 11:00 AM – 5:30 PM

Sunday, Monday, and Evenings by appointment

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

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Image credits:

(Left) Trenton Doyle Hancock, *Split Per Tonality*, 2016, acrylic and mixed media on canvas. Courtesy the artist and James Cohan Gallery.

(Right) Shoshanna Weinberger, *Dislocated*, 2021, ink and gouache on paper. Courtesy the artist and Johnson Lowe Gallery.