

ABI SALAMI

FROM BEHIND
THE VINE



artist in residence

2023-2024

A B I S A L A M I

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Abi Salami is a self-taught artist who creates large-scale surrealist works that explore her experiences as a Nigerian immigrant and Black woman in the United States. Through the use of a personal visual lexicon made up of symbols, she explores topics such as sexuality, mental health and race.

She earned a Masters in Professional Accounting from the University of Texas at Austin and worked in Corporate America for almost a decade before committing to painting full-time. Since then, she has gone on to exhibiting across the United States and Europe including at The Women's Museum and the African American Museum of Art in Dallas, Cris Worley Fine Arts in Dallas, C24 Gallery and Field Projects in New York City, and Galerie Droste in Germany.

She was the winner of the 2021 Hopper Prize. She was selected as a candidate of the Saatchi Art 2020 Rising Stars under 35 Class and a 2021 New Voices Top 100 Artists. She and her work have been featured on the Washington Post, New York Times, Artland, Artsy, D Magazine, Glasstire and Patron Magazine. In 2023, Abi Salami was chosen to be the first artist in residence for the inaugural Valerie Gillespie Contemporary residency program in Dallas, TX. "From Behind the Vine" is the culminating exhibition from the work created within Salami's 8-week residency. Abi Salami will join Pencil on Paper Gallery at The Dallas Art Fair this Spring to feature her artwork alongside two other artists.



"In 'From Behind the Vine,' I delve into a world shaped by The Leveling – a fictional yet disturbingly plausible event where Earth's atmosphere becomes dangerously saturated with carbon dioxide. This imagined future echoes our current environmental crises, presenting humanity with a grave decision: escape to Mars or courageously remain on our home planet. This exhibition is my artistic rallying cry to confront our planet's challenges head-on, urging us not to forsake Earth in times of adversity.

In this narrative, those who choose to stay on Earth find salvation in reconnecting with their Yoruba spirituality. It is through the guidance and power of the Orishas, especially Oshun, the goddess of life and fertility, and Obatala, the creator of humanity, that a path to survival is unveiled. These deities endow the Earth's steadfast humans with the extraordinary ability to fuse their DNA with that of plants, allowing them to adapt and breathe the CO₂-rich air. This aspect of the story is crucial, highlighting the importance of rediscovering our roots and spiritual heritage to address and overcome our most daunting challenges.

This series marks a significant shift from my previous exhibition 'The Miseducation of Boys and Girls.' Here, I aim not just to educate but to re-educate, to unveil obscured truths and reconnect with a heritage long overshadowed by colonial narratives. This exhibition is a journey of unlearning and relearning, a rediscovery of wisdom and truths that colonialism had veiled.

Creating 'From Behind the Vine' transcended a typical artistic process; it was a spiritual pilgrimage. There were moments where my actions seemed guided by a force beyond myself – a spiritual dexterity flowing through me. This connection is evident in my choice to omit figures in my work. Inspired by my residency in Morocco, I sought to shift the focus from the politicized black body to themes transcending race and nationality. This decision stands against the expectation to justify art featuring black bodies solely through the lens of hardship and suffering.

This exhibition is a call to see beyond race and borders, to recognize our shared human experience. It's about right and wrong, acknowledging our integral role in nature, and embracing our responsibility to honor and protect our planet and its inhabitants. 'From Behind the Vine' stands as a crucial addition to the artistic canon at this moment. It is an invitation to viewers not just to observe but to engage, to partake in a shared journey of understanding, introspection, and transformation. It is a personal exploration, a collective narrative, and a universal lesson.

As you walk through this exhibition, I hope you connect with these pieces as I have – with a sense of wonder, a spirit of inquiry, and a heart open to the lessons we must learn to forge a path forward, in harmony with our world." – ABI SALAMI





from behind the vine

January 6 - March 2, 2024

SOLO EXHIBITION | ABI SALAMI
VALERIE GILLESPIE CONTEMPORARY ARTIST IN RESIDENCE
PROGRAM | TWO-MONTH RESIDENCY IN DALLAS

P E N C I L O N P A P E R G A L L E R Y



ABI SALAMI
"A DISCOVERY" (STUDY)
12X12
2023
\$1,000.
MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS



ABI SALAMI
"FROM BEHIND THE VINE"
48X48
2023
\$9,500.
MIXED MEDIA &
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS



ABI SALAMI
"CARBON TEARS #1" &
"CARBON TEARS #2"
31X13
2023
\$2,500. (EACH)
MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS



ABI SALAMI
"WHISPERS OF THE
LEVELING'S NIGHT"

51X34

2023

\$7,500.

MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS

P E N C I L O N P A P E R G A L L E R Y



ABI SALAMI
"A DISCOVERY"

18X24

2023

\$3,000.

MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS

P E N C I L O N P A P E R G A L L E R Y



ABI SALAMI
"THE MOTHER"

24X36

2023

\$5,000.

MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS

P E N C I L O N P A P E R G A L L E R Y



ABI SALAMI
"THE LEVELING'S NIGHT"
36X48
2023
\$7,200.
MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS



ABI SALAMI
"LÁTI LEYIN AJARÀ"
48X48
2023
\$9,500.
MIXED MEDIA &
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS



ABI SALAMI
"THE WORDS & LIGHT OF
THE ANCESTORS"
36X48
2023
\$7,200.
MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS

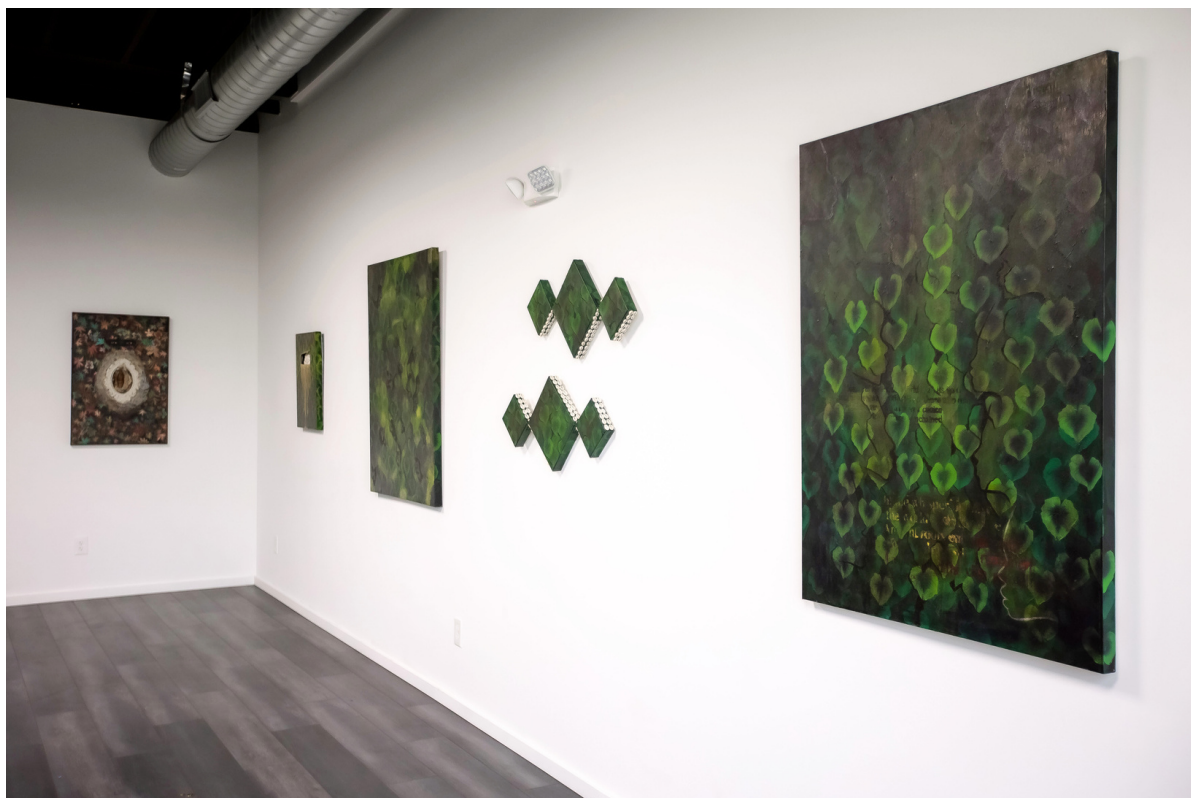
P E N C I L O N P A P E R G A L L E R Y



ABI SALAMI
"AND WE FOUND GOLD"
18X24
2023
\$3,000.
MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS



ABI SALAMI
"CARBON TEARS #1"
(DETAIL VIEW)
31X13
2023
\$2,500.
MIXED MEDIA ON CANVAS



ABI SALAMI
"FROM BEHIND THE VINE"
INSTALLATION VIEW
2023

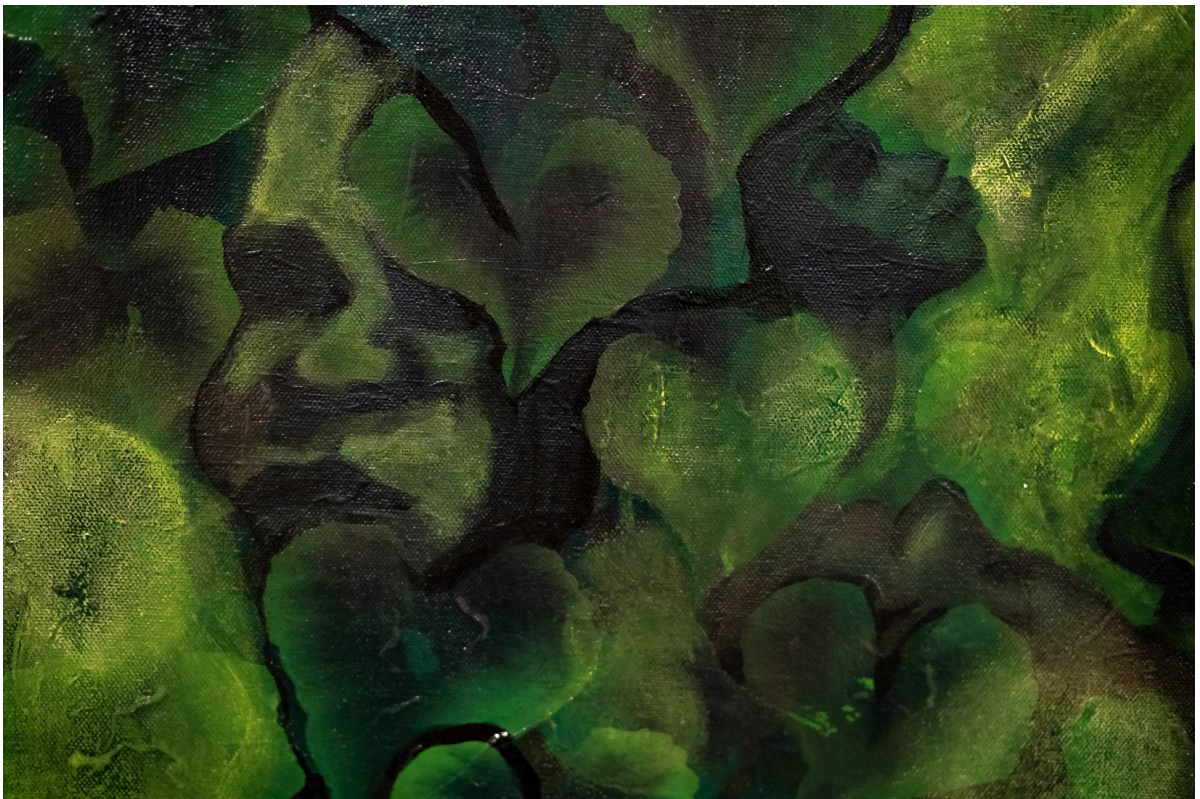
PENCIL ON PAPER GALLERY



ABI SALAMI
"FROM BEHIND THE VINE"
2023

P E N C I L O N P A P E R G A L L E R Y

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