

Refraction: New Photography of Africa and its Diaspora

LAUREN SINER / MAY 28, 2018

Refraction is an ocular cleanse. The works in *Refraction: New Photography of Africa and its Diaspora* bridge the gap between Black stereotypes and Black reality. Curated by **Cassandra Johnson** (**Steven Kasher**, <http://www.stevenkasher.com>) Director) and **Niama Safia Sandy** (Independent Curator and Anthropologist) the exhibition presents a generation of photographic artists of African descent who explore Black bodies in acts of cultural mediation. While not a technically “textile” show, many of the artists feature fabrics, patterns, and motifs that can connect fibers and photography. The exhibition includes works by *Surface Design Journal*’s Spring 2018 cover artist **Basil Kincaid** (<https://www.basilkincaid.com>)



Basil Kincaid *Exaltation* 2017, archival print on metal, 24" x 36".

The photographs in the exhibition navigate the complex relationship between innate identity evolved from social, political, and cultural influences. On a technical level, these artists are h dimensions in photography, bending, transmuting, and pushing the medium. They revive th African rites of masking, costuming, quilting, body ornamentation, and invocation of spirits.

Many works utilize contemporary art practices such as performative self portraiture, collage, digital manipulation. They merge cultures past and present, looking towards a more inclusive future.

On one hand, there are the documentary styles of **Girma Berta** (https://www.instagram.com/girma_berta) and **Eyerusalem Adugna Jirenga** (<https://addisfineart.com/artists/56-eyerusalem-jirer>) both under 30, who provide contemporary outlooks on the urban African environment.



Girma Berta *Moving Shadows II, XII, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia* 2017, archival pigment print, 35.5" x 35.5".



Eyerusalem Adugna Jirenga *The City of Saints VII* 2017, archival pigment print, 31.5" x 31.5".

Hakeem Adewumi (<https://www.hadewumi.com>), **Emilie Regnier** (<http://www.emilier>), **Zarita Zevallos** (<http://infi-nerdy.com>) make portraits that examine cross-cultural signifier cinematic beauty.



Hakeem Adewumi *The Tragic Moor II* 2017, archival pigment print, 18" x 12".

Shawn Theodore (<https://www.shawntheodo.re>) and **Stan Squirewell** (<http://www.sta>) employ digital and analog photomontage techniques drawing on personal experiences and examine the fluctuating understanding of the self.



Stan Squirewell *Afrosaxon III* 2018, mixed media collage, 30" x 25".

Basil Kincaid (<https://www.basilkincaid.com>) and **Keyezua** (<http://keyezuavision.tumblr.com>) use performative scenarios with hand crafted quilts, masks, and costumes to act out empowering rituals.



Basil Kincaid *Awaiting Instruction* 2017, archival metal prints, 24" x 24".



Keyezua Fortia (1) 2017, giclée print on Hanhemühle paper, 35.5" x 23.75".

Adama Delphine Fawundu (<https://www.delphinefawundu.com>) and **Ivan Forde** (<https://iforde.carbonmade.com>) create elaborate, dreamlike compositions using sewn cc cyanotype, creating modern representations of spiritual icons and ancient myths like Mami Wata and Gilgamesh.



Adama Delphine Fawundu *Passageways #1: Secrets, Traditions, Spoken and Unspoken Truths or Not* 2017, archival pigment print, 45" x 34".

These images act as flares in our cultural consciousness. They confront and expose existing constructs that will never be more than approximations of a more complex reality. As **Sarah** *many movements began when an aesthetic encounter indelibly changed our past perception. The imagination inspired by aesthetic encounters can get us to the point of benevolent surrender for a new version of our collective selves."*

Important Info:

- On display until June 2nd, 2018
- Steven Kasher Gallery is located at 515 W. 26th St., New York, NY 10001

- Gallery hours are Tuesday–Saturday 10am to 6pm
- <http://www.stevenkasher.com> (<http://www.stevenkasher.com>)

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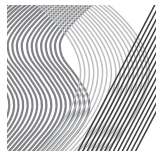
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