



# Johnson Lowe Gallery Announces Group Show *In Unity, as in Division*

October 6, 2023 to November 11, 2023

Opening Reception: Friday, October 6, 2023

Johnson Lowe Gallery, Georgia, announces *In Unity as in Division*, a group exhibition featuring new works from seven emerging artists working and living within the Atlanta Metropolitan Area. On view from October 6, 2023 to November 11, 2023, the exhibition showcases the works of Demetri Burke, Danielle Deadwyler, Leia Genis, Wihro Kim, Masela Nkolo, Sergio Suarez, and Ellex Swavoni, continuing the gallery's commitment to championing artists from Atlanta and the Global South.

*In Unity, as in Division* is a testament to Atlanta's pioneering artists who are actively shaping the city's artistic terrain. Rather than adhering to a collective theme or narrative, Johnson Lowe Gallery dedicated several months to closely collaborating with each of the artists featured to cultivate seven solo micro-exhibitions, capturing their current conceptual, philosophical and creative focus. The result offers a glimpse into the microcosm of Atlanta's artistic landscape, honoring the unique talents of each artist whilst emphasizing the significance of cultivating collaborative and communal relationships within artistic circles.

Director Donovan Johnson states: "Every city has its unique brand of magic; its own sensibilities and inherited cultural legacies which create its sense of community. As cities grow, rigid definitions or identities become harder to pin down. *In Unity As In Division* peers into the creative practices of seven artists and gives us all an opportunity to see the world through the eyes of members of the generation who will create the culture and zeitgeist of tomorrow, not just for Atlanta, but the world. For each of our experiences are but a microcosm of the reflections of our communities and beyond, throughout time."

This exhibition builds on Johnson Lowe Gallery's foundational practice and ongoing commitment to engage its community's voices through programming in exploratory ways.

*In Unity, as in Division* is on view from October 6, 2023 through November 11, 2023, coinciding with the second edition of Atlanta Art Week in October 2023.

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## About The Artists

Demetri Burke (b. Atlanta, GA. 1998)

Demetri Burke's practice is diverse and fluid, never fully standing still for too long. Focusing intensely on the black figure yet, at times, building layer after layer to create murky images of nostalgia through a Southern lens. An amalgamation of motifs and thought, each work is unified in its intimacy with the viewer: the depiction of Blackness, the narratives that wrestle with trauma and affection. Utilizing oil paint, charcoal, and found images, Burke expresses compelling narratives of identity and culture on canvas. Abstraction, montage, and realistic rendering are key parts of his creation process, leaning on constant examination of cultural nuances that become visible in his findings. Burke obtained a BFA Degree in Studio Art from Georgia State University. In 2022, he debuted his first solo exhibition, *And Then We Heard the Thunder*.

Danielle Deadwyler (b. Atlanta GA. 1982)

Danielle Deadwyler is a multidisciplinary performance artist, actor, and filmmaker. "With filmmaking, theatre, and performance art as my primary media, public and private work, race, gender, and sexuality, and public performance and community dialogue are themes central to my practice. Deadwyler continues, "My work explores how lines are blurred in the labor of black women, especially within domestic and sexual work, and the impact this has on the black body. I'm interested in emboldening black women subjectively within live performance engagement in local communities, a framework for navigating what I call a Black Americana chaos. Creating spaces to interact with black female subjectivity in a myriad of social spheres, as a pedestalized marvel in live performances, film works, sonic and lyrical play, and objects is my daily investment."

Leia Genis (b. Chicago, IL. 1997)

Leia Genis utilizes cyanotype, installation works, and performance art to examine esoteric concepts of individuals or groups who have been marginalized who have been excluded from the mainstream dialogue. The disenfranchised, women, people of color along with members of the LGBTQ + community. A graduate of the Savannah College of Art and Design with degrees in painting and sculpture, her artwork has been exhibited nationally and internationally at venues such as MOCA GA (Atlanta) and the Ipswich Biennale (Ipswich, UK). An artist and writer, Genis is currently a member of the Atlanta Contemporary staff where she coordinates programming and manages the studio artist program.

Wihro Kim (b. New York, NY. 1991)

Wihro Kim captures two worlds, the observable and the imagined, as interwoven realities in the same line of vision. By collapsing the contours between interiors and exteriors, dreams and realities, objects and the negative spaces in between, Kim's paintings traverse multiple visual planes, combining them into a single parcel rather than discrete parts. Kim received his BFA from Georgia State University in 2015. Kim was a Waltham Fellow for the 2016-2017 cycle and was named a finalist for the 2017-2018 Forward Arts Foundation Emerging Artist Award. Since graduating, Kim has shown locally in Atlanta at MOCA GA, Hathaway Contemporary, and Poem 88 amongst others.

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Masela Nkolo (b. Kinshasa, Congo -1990)

Masela Nkolo is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice combines found and manmade materials such as oil lanterns, bicycle frames, cabinet doors, screwdrivers, metal baskets, and other miscellaneous utilitarian objects. These materials are deconstructed and reconstructed into creatures that manifest, and represent the past and contemporary identity of Congo, as seen through his personal experiences and memories. "By combining different materials, techniques, and ideas from the past and present, I am exploring my genre of expression which is syncretism. Syncretism is the combination of separate concepts into a new, unique idea. For me that's incorporating classical African art and contemporary art. Nkolo states, " My representations of the creations incite an appreciation of self, and also a way of relearning to celebrate ourselves." His work has previously been exhibited on display at various galleries such as Moca, GA; the Mint Museum, NC and Artfields, SC.

Sergio Suárez (b. Mexico, 1995)

Sergio Suárez presents reality by transgressing traditional boundaries between mediums. Suarez mixes art-making materials and unique processes to develop his unique visual language. Suarez samples sections from various woodblocks, compiling elements from different tableaux onto a single canvas, assembling, and giving form to the metaphysical forces swirling through his cosmic mythologies. As structures and narratives collide, time seems to collapse and the impression sets in that we may be seeing the same moment from multiple vantage points at once.

Ellex Swavoni (b. Louisville, KY 1992)

Ellex Swavoni developed an art practice focused on exploring Afro-futurism, representing women as powerful entities and processing ancient ideas into a futurist aesthetic. Ellex Swavoni's art practice emanates from the realms of ancient African artifacts, comics, and physics. Her work can be described as Afro-futurism as it speaks specifically to the diaspora and calls upon us to connect with the past and aspire to audacious futures. With the courage and curiosity within us all and knowledge of recent and ancient histories, we can operate beyond the confines of standard thought and develop new realities for ourselves. A self-taught sculptor from Louisville, Ky, Swavoni studied graphic design at Campbellsville University where she received a Bachelor of Science in 2014. She is currently living and working in Atlanta, Ga, where she has conducted traveling and permanent public art installations.

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## 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, intending to honor the profound nature of visual language and its role 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.

## About Donovan Johnson

Donovan Johnson is the Co-Owner and Director of Johnson Lowe Gallery. Johnson carries over a decade of experience working in world-class contemporary art galleries, including Bill Lowe Gallery, Lisa Cooley, and Hathaway Contemporary. Through his extensive expertise in art curation and collection management, Johnson has curated several exhibitions, including six shows at Bill Lowe Gallery, most notably Michael David's *The Mirror Stage* and Jimmy O'Neal's *About Now: An Introspective*. Johnson was appointed as Director of Bill Lowe Gallery in 2021, and in 2023 the gallery was renamed Johnson Lowe Gallery to honor both the legacy of its late founder and the partnership with Johnson himself. The gallery's inaugural exhibition *The Alchemists* was co-curated by Johnson and scholar, critic, and curator Seph Rodney, Ph.D.

Johnson is dedicated to revitalizing the gallery's programming to provide greater support for artists from across Atlanta, as well as those from the American and Global South.

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## Notes to Editors

Title: *In Unity, as in Division*

Dates: October 6, 2023 to November 11, 2023

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[www.johnsonlowe.com](http://www.johnsonlowe.com)

### Hours:

Tuesday – Friday | 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM

Saturday | 11:00 AM – 5:30 PM

Sunday, Monday, and Evenings by appointment

[Instagram](#)

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