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VENICE, CALIFORNIA  
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# SEEN UNSEEN

Curated by Alison Saar

11 November 2021 - 8 January 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 2021

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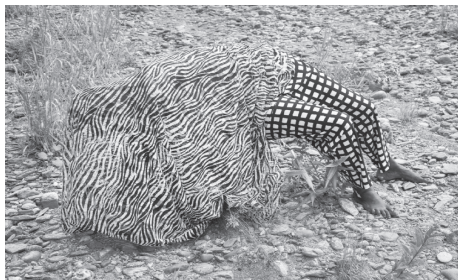


Vanessa German, *This Togetherness, (Couples Therapy)*, 2021  
Mixed media assemblage  
23 x 33 x 12 in (63.5 x 83.8 x 30.5 cm)

L.A. Louver is pleased to present SeenUNseen, a group exhibition curated by Alison Saar. The ten featured artists seem to conjure their images from another plane, giving form to something heretofore unseen and immaterial. Artists include JOJO ABOT, Rina Banerjee, Vanessa German, Kathy Grove, Julia Haft-Candell, Keisha Scarville, Ricardo Vicente Jose Ruiz, Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle, Arthur Simms, and Saar herself.

SeenUNseen builds its energy around the idea of Spirit Portraiture. The belief that spirits can be captured in visual form predates ancient history, but emerged forcefully around the turn of the 20th century with the advent of popular photography. This new medium ushered in manipulations of image that could “capture” spirits and evoke other phenomenal presences on film. Extending this idea into the present day, the artists gathered here are believers, agitators, healers, and mediums, channeling power and narrative from history, folklore, politics, and ancestral inheritance. They catch hold of something from the great beyond and bring it to life within their work, giving face to the intangible energies that infuse our world.

Several of the artists work with found materials that permeate the work with histories and meanings accumulated in previous lives. Vanessa German’s mixed media sculptures take the form of figures that assign power or offer protection, and are assembled from found and repurposed materials. German draws from diasporic traditions of craft and folklore, imbuing her figures with spiritual and ancestral significance. Keisha Scarville’s ongoing series *Mama’s Clothes* reanimates clothing that once belonged to her late mother as an act of transformative communion with a departed loved one, while Arthur Simms’ assemblage works build upon the art historical precedents of Marcel Duchamp and the Surrealists, seeking out found materials that assert their own significance.



Keisha Scarville, *Untitled #18, 2017, 'Mama's Clothes Series'*  
Archival inkjet print  
24 x 36 in (61 x 91.4 cm)



JOJO ABOT, *Mawu Deka*, 2015  
Bogolan , acrylic, yarn , beads  
66 x 41 x 2 in (167.6 x 104.1 x 5.1 cm)

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Making visible something that has been previously invisible echoes the language of universal change, of social movements like Black Lives Matter and other calls for renewed, more just, and more real ways of being seen. Kenyatta A.C. Hinkle's series *The Evanesced* is a manifestation of the #SayHerName movement of mourning, consciousness-raising, and healing surrounding the disappearance of hundreds of black womxn across the African diaspora. Ricardo Vicente Jose Ruiz synthesizes Indigenous folklore and ecological practices in work aimed at deconstructing the difficult histories of groups marginalized by colonialism. Their intention is to disseminate an intersectional dialogue that accesses past, present, and future timelines to locate modes for metaphysical reconciliation.

Other works call to mind the more personal spiritual practices of divination, incantation, and manifestation. Julia Haft-Candell creates abstract works in clay and bronze that incorporate a personal visual lexicon of archetypal symbols in the fashion of a personalized Tarot deck. These seemingly ancient forms work as tools for divination as the clay struggles to take shape. Rina Banerjee's long, lyrical titles spill forth as beguiling poetic evocations, while the intricate detail in JOJO ABOT's sewn and painted works creates a spiritual link with the meditative, trancelike state achieved by traditional conjurers through repetitive labor. And the juxtaposition of appropriated Victorian-era domestic photographs and modern digital intrusions in Kathy Grove's photographs manifest surreal, otherworldly results, seemingly revealing entities and worlds normally hidden to the human gaze.

Alison Saar's installation in the south gallery will be a life-sized female figure surrounded by mirrors and bits of flash to attract wandering spirits. This interlocutor between our world and the next draws from the stories of Yoruba tradition, layered with those of classical Greek myth. Saar has shown with L.A. Louver since 2006; this is the first exhibition she has curated for the gallery.

**Also on view at L.A. Louver 11 November 2021 - 8 January 2022:**  
*Don Suggs: Out of Body*