



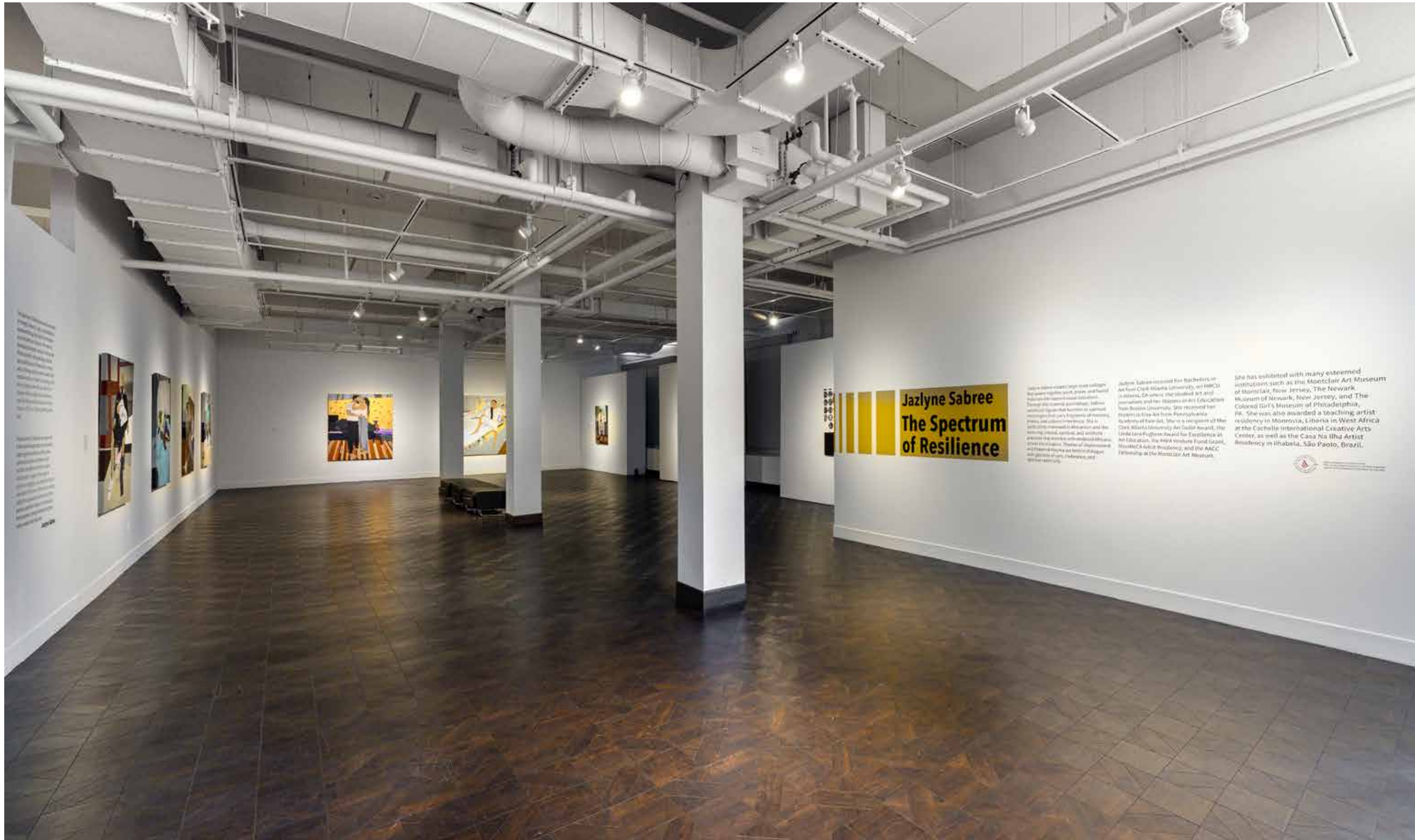
Jazlyne Sabree
The Spectrum
of Resilience



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April 6 - June 27, 2026 **RUMOCA**
AT 301 HIGH STREET

Jazlyne Sabree creates large-scale collages that weave together paint, paper, and found materials into layered visual narratives. Through this material assemblage, Sabree constructs figures that function as spiritual messengers that carry fragments of memory, history, and cultural inheritance. She is particularly interested in Africanism and the enduring cultural, spiritual, and aesthetic practices that traveled with enslaved Africans across the diaspora. Themes of displacement and historical trauma are held in dialogue with gestures of care, endurance, and spiritual continuity. Sabree juxtaposes fragility with resilience, suggesting that survival within the African diaspora is not only an act of resistance but also one of profound creativity and transformation.



Biography of the artist, Jazlyne Sabree, detailing her education and professional background.



Jazlyne Sabree The Spectrum of Resilience

Jazlyne Sabree earned her Bachelor's in Art from Clark Atlanta University, an MFA in Atlanta, GA where she studied Art and Journalism and her Masters in Art Education from Boston University. She received her Masters in Fine Art from Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art. She is a recipient of the Clark Atlanta University Art Gilder Award, the Linda Lee Pugh Award for Excellence in Art Education, the RFA Venture Fund Grant, MaxMcCA Artist Residency, and the AACC Fellowship at the Montclair Art Museum.

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She has exhibited with many esteemed institutions such as the Montclair Art Museum of Montclair, New Jersey, The Newark Museum of Newark, New Jersey, and The Colored Girl's Museum of Philadelphia, PA. She was also awarded a teaching artist residency in Monrovia, Liberia in West Africa at the Cabelle International Creative Arts Center, as well as the Casa Na Ilha Artist Residency in Ilhabela, São Paulo, Brazil.



Happy/Hunting The Art of Jazlyne Sabree

by Alexandra Jane

“Until lions have their own historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter.”

-Igbo Proverb

It is a Native American belief that when we die, our spirits transcend towards “happy hunting grounds,” an Eden-like afterlife of abundance and ease. There is debate around whether or not this phrase is a true Indianism, or a leftover expression from British invaders who arrived on occupied territory, using these words to describe land they saw as being ripe for exploitation and terror to serve their own gains and gods. The ironic tension here sits within the ownership of the original phrasing, and how the truth teeters between such stark differences. Through the indigenous belief, the phrase suggests everlasting peace and spiritual continuity. However, through the lens of a colonizer, death is reframed as a blunt, violent, and permanent ending, with only the hunter emerging as victor.

An Igbo proverb reads: “Until lions have their own historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunter.” This line, popularized across western culture by Nigerian poet and novelist Chinua Achebe, teaches us that the privilege of truth lies between the lips of the storyteller, the history holder. So when it comes to Black American history, the question then becomes: “Who is telling the stories?” To extend upon this question, I also offer: Who are our memory keepers, and what are their mediums?

For the answer to these questions and others, we must look to the artists and cultural workers.

New Jersey based visual artist Jazlyne Sabree is one such memory keeper. Sabree is an educator, spiritualist, and history hunter. In fact, she’s always been a truth seeker, leaning on her intuition to decipher when something simply feels “off.” Growing up in the small, Black suburban town of Willingboro, New Jersey, a young Sabree did not encounter many opportunities to act as a radical. Instead, she created them for herself. She recalls being asked to stand for the pledge of allegiance along with the rest of her elementary grade classmates. She refused, opting for detention as the only alternative to passive compliance.

“I cannot remember what led me to make this decision,” Sabree recounts. “I just remember having this deep knowing that the American Dream was a lie, and that I would not pledge allegiance to this country.”

Despite having no radical political influences from her family or fellow townshippers, Sabree felt pulled to interrogate this so-called allegiance, and who this allegiance actually serves. Thirty years later, Sabree continues to interrogate and disrupt historical mistruths through her art.

As you first approach Sabree’s paintings, the viewer’s eye is drawn to the artist’s use of bold colors, intriguing patterns, and large figures that occupy the full span of the canvas. Some figures like the individual featured in



Patient Recovery: Evidence of Survival, 2026

Patient Recovery: Evidence of Survival, 2026, are faced forward—positioned and posed to later be recorded by the sweep of Sabree’s brush. Other figures like the lovers depicted in *Closed Eyes Because I’m Practicing Trust (The Kiss), 2026*, are shown in the middle of a more intimate moment where the documentarian doesn’t seem to be present at all.

Overall, there is a quotidian nature to Sabree’s latest collection of work. The viewer is able to connect with the subjects through relatable personal and interpersonal scenes such as a femme presenting figure primping in the bathroom mirror in *Domestic Regulation (Edited for Compliance), 2026*, or the mother squatting with her two children close in *Let My Power Wedge Into Your Lives, 2023*. And though it is not made explicit across these works that the subjects are Black American through their complexion, one might make cultural assumptions about the subjects by their posture, hair texture, accessories, and the rituals depicted in the painting. In *Anoint My Head With Oil, 2025*, one figure sits between the legs of another getting their scalp oiled, an age-old Black and brown care practice sometimes shared between partners, family, or friends.



Closed Eyes Because I’m Practicing Trust (The Kiss), 2026

As for the makeup of the figures themselves, well, it’s perhaps the most unavoidable detail of the work. Each subject across the collection dons the skin of an endangered animal, specifically leopards, giraffes, and zebras—all animals indigenous to West Africa. As Sabree sees it, Black people in America are endangered in their home country as well. The Black body as target or quarry is an established paradigm throughout the



Domestic Regulation (Edited for Compliance), 2026



Let My Power Wedge Into Your Lives, 2023

history of the United States. From slave catchers to ill qualified neighborhood patrolmen, Black Americans and their ancestors have been hunted since before they touched foot to this soil. The legacy of this “sport” is not only memefied (Russell, Legacy, 2024) across our social feeds in contemporary times, but has also been archived in headlines that not so subtly speak to its inheritance.

Articles reading: “Black man tracked, chased, pursued,” ultimately falling prey to the hunter—the state, organized terrorist organizations, and unorganized good ol’ boy militias.

In the case of Ahmaud Arbery, an unarmed 25-year old Black man, murdered in February of 2020, three white male residents of a South Georgia neighborhood tracked, chased, pursued- hunted—the young and ambitious former football star while jogging.

In 1996, an investigative report, commonly referred to as “Good O’ Boy Roundup Report” was released by the U.S. Department of the Treasury Office of Inspector General following reporting by the Washington Times. The report examined allegations that “nigger hunting” licenses were being passed around at an unofficial



Anoint My Head with Oil, 2025

gathering of The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, (ATF), which was under investigation at the time for racist and sexist behavior, and disorderly conduct, among other claims. While there was ultimately no proof that these licenses were distributed at the event, there is ample evidence of similar “mock” items or racist ephemera circulating across decades.

These animal skins in the art of Jazlyne Sabree are not masks, but full-body coverings meant to protect the subject. Like the skin on any body, their function is to serve as a barrier between the individual and external threats. These threats could be environmental such as UV rays, free radicals or pollution, but they could also be state sanctioned by way of surveillance, policing, premature death, or even the gaze of an ordinary gallery-goer. The figures are intentionally left without eyes or other facial features that may invite viewers to become perhaps too familiar with the subject, or the spirit of the original sitter.

As Sabree explains, the deployment of these animal skins are also representative of the spiritual guides that these animals symbolize in West African cultures. For instance, the Benin leopard symbolizes strength, protection, and physical triumph.

It is often cast in bronze, and remains an important figure in Yoruba culture today. The artist also states that the animal skins are not only intended to characterize endangered animals, but endangered spiritual practices as well. With these works, Sabree challenges Black American viewers to learn and reconnect with ancestral rituals, tools, and modalities. In fact, Sabree leans on her own spirit guides to help inform the final details of the painting.

“I decided to go back to grad school so that I could combine all of the research I had been doing {between 2019 and 2022} into my own ancestry, my own genealogy, and into West African spiritual traditions with my physical practice,” Sabree shares. “I remember I was having really intense dreams...seeing these artworks and these figures in my dreamspace, and I couldn’t for the life of me figure out how to achieve them. I knew I needed space to create and to meditate and reflect..and that is what I was afforded during my time at {the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts residency}. That was when I was finally able to achieve those things that were in my vision.”



Rest is a Side Effect of Love, 2024

This visioning does the important work of telling the story situated behind, but not directly connected to the figure. In other words, do not be fooled by the background as mere placeholder. Figurative abstraction meets realism in this collection as the photographic images at the back of the subjects unveil a tale of its own, all depicting slave associated locations.

As an example, the backdrop of *Rest is a Side Effect of Love, 2024* is an image taken in East Rutherford, New Jersey on land now occupied by the American Dream Mall. This region, the New Jersey Meadowlands, has been named by some historians as “The Mississippi of The North.” With possible connections to Underground Railroad routes, the irony is overt: a building named for a largely unfulfilled promise rises atop swamplands that may have once helped enslaved peoples carve out their own slice of freedom.

Sabree refers to herself as a “super sleuth.” A detective cosplaying an artist, hunting down hidden truths, and revealing these stories through her art.

Excuse the redundancy in this phrasing, but Black people are indeed resilient. When challenged by a friend and collaborator on its use in the title of her current Rowan University Museum of Contemporary Art solo show, *The Spectrum of Resilience*, she had this to say: “I do not hate the word resilience. What I hate is the way that people identify this word. Resilience doesn’t always look like strength, sometimes it looks like weakness. Sometimes our very survival is the resilience.”

Resilience is a spectrum. This spectrum includes grief and sorrow just as much as it includes joy and happiness. It carries the weight of history—the legacies of the hunter, the hunted, and the muddying of these waters. It also holds futurities of care, life and liberation. It holds too, the promise of an afterlife: happy hunting grounds where spirit transcends all. We will look to our artists to light the way. In seeking truth. In seeking joy. As historians for the lions.

Happy. Hunting.



Jazlyne Sabree (b. 1990, New Jersey) is an interdisciplinary artist based in the Greater Philadelphia area. She received her Bachelors in Art from Clark Atlanta University, an HBCU in Atlanta, GA where she studied art and journalism. She then went on to become an art educator, returning to college to receive her Masters in Art Education at Boston University. She received her Masters in Fine Art at Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art. She is a recipient of the Clark Atlanta University Art Guild Award, the Linda Lora Pugliese Award for Excellence in Art Education, the PAFA Venture Fund Grant, MassMoCA Artist Residency, and the AACC Fellowship at the Montclair Art Museum. She has exhibited with many esteemed institutions such as the Montclair Art Museum of Montclair, New Jersey, The Newark Museum of Newark, New Jersey, and The Colored Girl's Museum of Philadelphia, PA. Additionally, she has been featured on platforms such as News 12, WHYY, several podcasts such as The Truth in this Art, and in many publications. She was also awarded a teaching artist residency in Monrovia, Liberia in West Africa at the Cabelle International Creative Arts Center, as well as the Casa Na Ilha Artist Residency in Ilhabela, São Paulo, Brazil. Her work is in the permanent collection of the Waldemar Belisário Museum in Ilhabela, São Paulo, Brazil, and the PAFA Museum in Philadelphia along with many other private collections.



Alexandra Jane is a North Carolina-based curator, writer, and cultural producer whose work centers Black, queer, and feminist perspectives across art and community practice.

Her experience includes gallery administration for Latin American Contemporary Art (LACA) in Charlotte, NC, and curating exhibitions such as MÔR: A Collective Exhibition of Black Lesbian Thought (2022) and And Sew It Seams (2024). In addition to curatorial work, she has written for Essence, EBONY, Ms. Magazine and Everything Is Political. She currently serves as the Director of Communications and Cultural Strategy for The Black Girl's Guide to Surviving Menopause in Durham, N.C. and as the Artist Programs Manager at Artspace in Raleigh, NC.

*“The Spectrum of Resilience reveals moments of strength, tenacity, vigor, and adaptation expressed through the spirits of members across the African Diaspora. This work is developed alongside research into my own African ancestry and genealogy, and the ancestral histories of those that I connect with on the way and my own research from literature such as: Oxford’s *Archaeology of the African Diaspora*, the African Union’s *The Diaspora Division*, and *Cultural Resilience and Filial Responsibility Among the African Diaspora: To Be or To Belong* among other texts.*”

These themes of resilience are expressed in the work through posture and moment, capturing the candid lives of the sitters, communicating their authentic spirit and their strength in all of their subtle declarations. It captures the range of emotions, struggles, joys, and pains that are witnessed in the lives of African descendants, calling for acceptance and embrace of their presence and their history in a time where their presence is being inhibited and their truths, erased and distorted.”

-Jazlyne Sabree



Exhibition Checklist



Always Sleep in Paw Paw's Lap, 2025
Acrylic, tissue paper, vellum on canvas
60 x 48 inches



Life Raft, 2024
Acrylic, vellum, tissue paper, glass on canvas
60 x 48 inches



Anoint My Head with Oil, 2025
Acrylic, tissue paper, vellum on canvas
60 x 48 inches



Rest is a Side Effect of Love, 2024
Acrylic, tissue paper, vellum, plastic, paper on canvas
60 x 48 inches



Closed Eyes Because I'm Practicing Trust (The Kiss), 2026
Acrylic, tissue paper, vellum
72 x 60 inches



Between Drips and Dignity, 2026
Acrylic, paper, vellum photograph, glass
72 x 60 inches



Patient Recovery: Evidence of Survival, 2026
Acrylic, paper, vellum photograph, glass
48 x 36 inches



Domestic Regulation (Edited for Compliance), 2026
Acrylic, tissue paper, vellum
36 x 36 inches



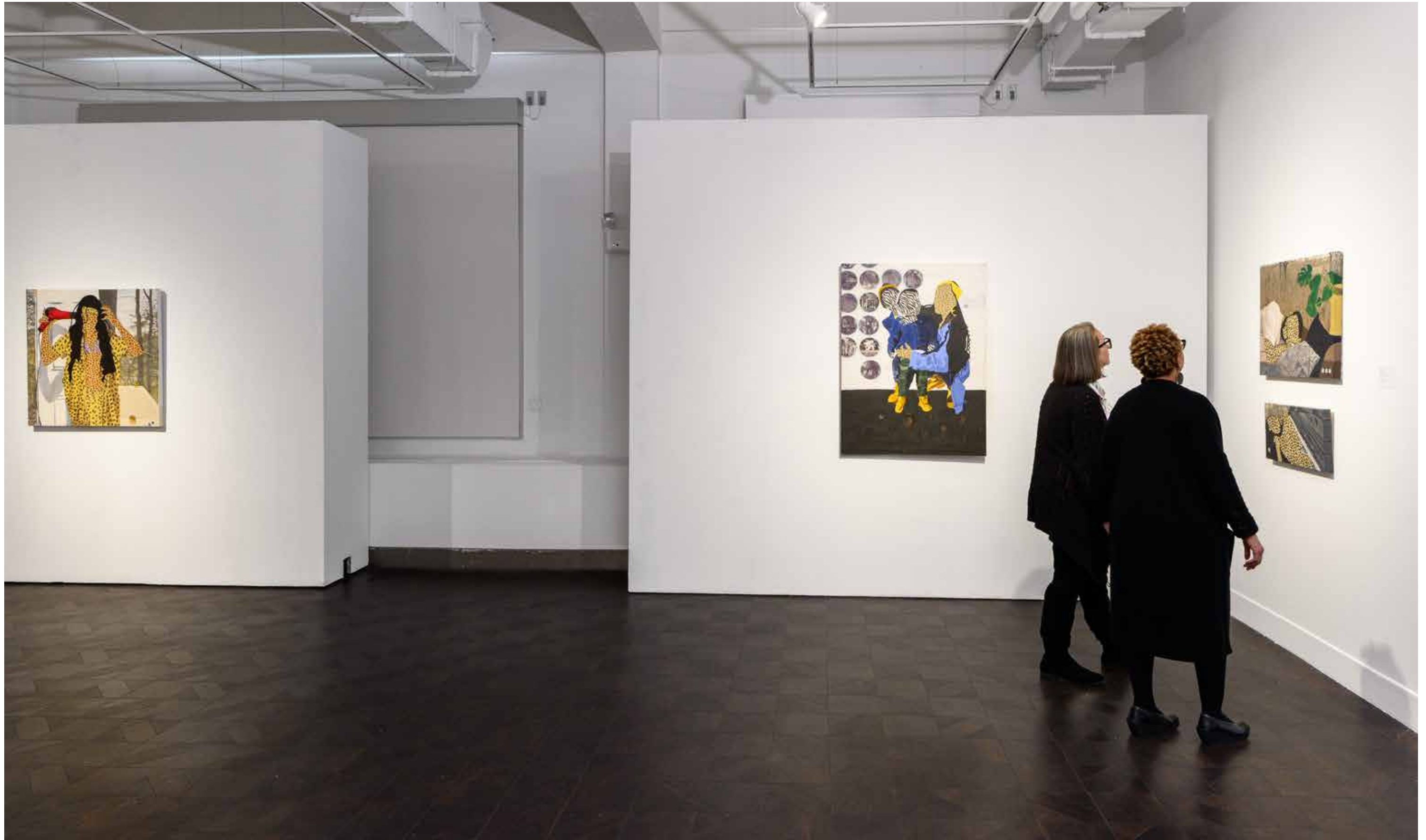
Let My Power Wedge Into Your Lives, 2023
Acrylic, tissue paper, vellum, glass on canvas
48 x 36 inches



top:
Stillness, 2025
Acrylic, tissue paper, glass on vellum
24 x 36 inches
Courtesy Keith and Shanella Lewis



bottom:
I Got You, 2024
Acrylic, paper, vellum photograph, glass
12 x 24 inches



Acknowledgements

Rowan University Museum of Contemporary Art is honored to present this exhibition and the work of artist Jazlyne Sabree. We greatly appreciate her time and assistance on the selection of the work and exhibition production. Special thanks to Alexandra Jane for her thoughtful and inspiring catalogue essay. Additional thanks go to our Gallery Coordinator Kristin Qualls for her beautiful catalog design and exhibition production management.

We would also like to acknowledge our art installers CJ Stahl and Nathan Dixon; and our student interns Sammi Buresh, Leila Hewitt, Allison Hillman, Jaylah Ross, and Elise Sperry for their support.

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Photography courtesy of:

Constance Mensh (pages 4-5, 12-13, 24-25)

Erik James Montgomery (pages 7-9, 14-23)

Jazlyne Sabree (page 10)

Alexandra Jane (page 10)

Catalog Design:

Kristin Qualls

ROWAN UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

The Rowan University Museum of Contemporary Art (RUMOCA) serves as a vibrant cultural destination for South Jersey, the Rowan community, and the surrounding region. We are committed to cultivating an inclusive, accessible, and just environment that promotes dialogue and collaboration among artists, students, faculty, the public, and other cultural institutions. Through interdisciplinary exhibitions, artist talks, public programming, and a world-class permanent collection, RUMOCA presents diverse forms of contemporary art by professional artists whose work is thought-provoking, relevant, and timely.

The Museum operates two venues: RUMOCA at 301 High Street presents curated exhibitions by professional contemporary artists, accompanied by robust educational programming. Located at the intersection of Rowan University's campus and the heart of Glassboro, the gallery functions as an active arts resource for both students and the broader public. RUMOCA at Westby Hall features curated selections from the museum's collection and is anchored by a permanent installation of *The Sister Chapel*, a historic feminist collaboration.



rowan.edu/arts/museum

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