

STEVEN ZEVITAS GALLERY

PAPAY SOLOMON: *Nightmares Americana*

October 2 – November 28, 2020

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October 2 – November 28, 2020

opening reception: October 2, 5:30 – 8 pm

Steven Zevitas Gallery is pleased to present *Nightmares Americana*, an exhibition of new paintings by Guinean-born and Phoenix-based painter Papay Solomon. The exhibition will run from October 2 – November 28, 2020 with an opening reception Friday, October 2, from 5:30 – 8 PM.

In conceiving the five large canvases that constitute *Nightmares Americana*, Solomon drew heavily from his own experience as a Liberian war refugee, in combination with a relentless urge to create a visual extension of Ibram X. Kendi's widely circulated article *The American Nightmare*, published in *The Atlantic* (June, 2020). As a refugee, Solomon lives between two worlds - the world of his adopted home in America and that of his African heritage. In his paintings, these two worlds relentlessly collide as Solomon's formal western art education coalesces with the indelible imprint of his home country.

In *The American Nightmare*, Kendi catalogs histories and events that have shaped the experience of Black Americans today. He takes particular interest in Frederick Hoffman's 1896 text titled *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro*, an influential text that helped legitimize two embryonic fields that now converge on black lives: public health and criminology. Hoffman argued that post-emancipation, Black Americans were "on the downward grade [...] headed toward 'gradual extinction'." The same year, Kendi points out, "The New York Times allocated a single sentence on page three to reporting the U.S. Supreme Court's *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision." These events in association with innumerable structures and offenses before and after have culminated in a bleak double entendre in which Black Americans became perceived by racist America as "America's nightmare," while being forced to *experience* the American Nightmare.

In the artist's words:

"As a first-generation immigrant from an African country, who has in many ways assimilated, I am the nightmare in Trump's America. This exhibition boldly shows faces with stories similar to my own, celebrated in their truest and most authentic selves."

Within this nightmare, Kendi and Solomon remind us, loved ones are *loving*. We are fighting, we are mourning, we are celebrating.

"Will we fight for black people to live? What choice will we make? What world will we create? What will we be?"

--Ibram X. Kendi

PAPAY SOLOMON

Papay Solomon (b. 1993 Guekedou, Guinea) lives and works in Phoenix, AZ. He has recently exhibited work with National Portrait Gallery (London, England), Phoenix Art Museum (Phoenix, AZ), Tucson Museum of Art (Tucson, AZ), Moniker International Art Fair (Brooklyn, NY), and Steven Zevitas Gallery. In 2018 he received the Contemporary Forum Emerging Artist Grant from the Phoenix Art Museum (Phoenix, AZ) and the Erni Cabat Award from the Tucson Museum of Art (Tucson, AZ). This is Solomon's second solo exhibition.

For additional information or visual material, please contact the gallery at 617-778-5265 or by email at info@stevenzevitasgallery.com.

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PAPAY SOLOMON

The Black Boy who Wears White Skin, Portrait of Yaya Simeon Edamivoh — Nigeria

2020

oil on linen

45 x 80 inches

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Detail, *The Black Boy who Wears White Skin, Portrait of Yaya Simeon Edamivoh — Nigeria*

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PAPAY SOLOMON

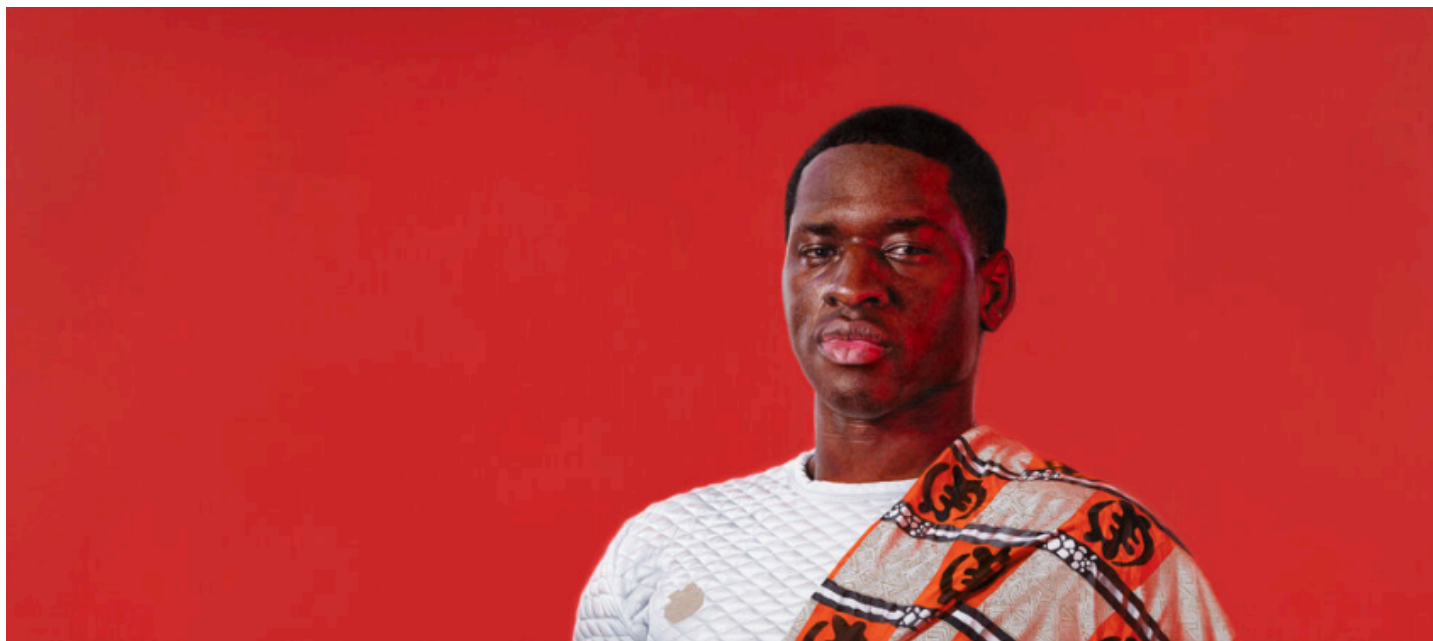
The One Who Flies, Portrait of Grace Carol - Equatorial Guinea

2020

oil on canvas

60 x 90 inches

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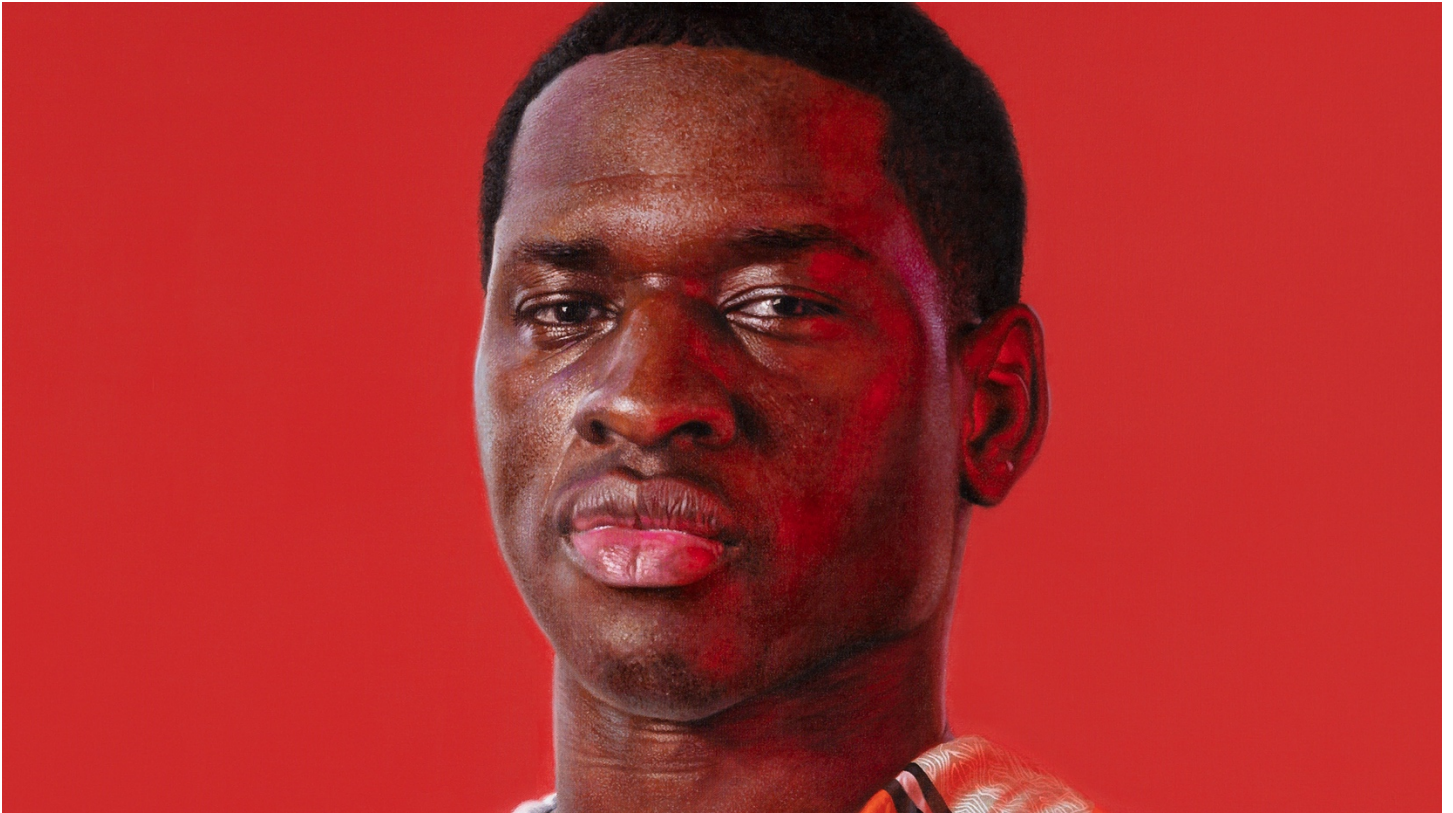
PAPAY SOLOMON

Unapologetically African, Portrait of Bocar Gueye— Senegal
2020

oil and pastel on linen

40 x 90 inches

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Detail, *Unapologetically African, Portrait of Bocar Gueye— Senegal*

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PAPAY SOLOMON

As a Heart Attack, Portrait of Natalie Ruth – Ghana, first generation

2020

oil and pastel on linen

45 x 80 inches

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PAPAY SOLOMON

32 Teeth and Counting, Portrait of Prince "Kpakala" Murray – Liberia

2020

oil on linen

45 x 80 inches