



LIFE'S A CARD GAME

RASHAWN PENISTER



MAY 12 - JUNE 25, 2022

ASC

Exhibition Statement: Rashawn Penister

My work explores the varying connections between playing cards and art. They're both appealing yet mysterious to the eye of the viewer. My inspiration came from a conversation I had with a coworker who told me that we must play the cards we're dealt with, meaning that we make use with what is afforded or available. The concept of my work is focused on creating a visual message with the playing cards, an object that is used for entertainment or personal purposes, that we are metaphorically playing a card game by making life choices.

My work is made from playing cards that are cut into different shapes to form the subject. I glued the cards to create the piece that is presented to the audience. Using cards, I'm able to take something that was used as a means of entertainment and create a work of art that is mesmerizing to the viewers.



LBJ, Mixed media, 36" x 48", 2018

Exhibited Works

- Cover: *Untitled 4*, Playing cards, charcoal, and acrylic on paper 22"x16", 2022
- Ali, Playing cards and acrylic on canvas 36"x48", 2018
- Basquiat, Playing cards and acrylic on canvas, 36"x48", 2019
- Being Calm, Playing cards and acrylic on paper, 20"x16", 2022
- Clark Terry, Playing cards and acrylic on paper,, 11"x14", 2021
- Dorothy, Playing cards and acrylic on paper, 22"x 16", 2019
- Fleeting Green, Playing cards and acrylic on paper, 20"x16", 2020
- Henry, Playing cards and acrylic on paper, 14"x11", 2020
- K Dot (Kendrick), Playing cards and acrylic on paper, 24"x18", 2018
- LBJ, Playing cards and acrylic on canvas, 36"x48", 2018
- Leroy Elridge Clever, Playing cards and acrylic on board, 18"x 24", 2019
- Looking Forward, Playing cards, charcoal, and acrylic on paper, 24" x 24", 2022
- Louis Shelton, Playing cards and acrylic on paper, 11"x14", 2020
- Miles Davis, Playing cards and acrylic on paper, 11"x14", 2020
- Untitled 1, Playing cards and acrylic on paper, 24"x 24", 2021
- Untitled 2, Playing cards and acrylic on paper, 22"x18", 2021
- Untitled 3, Playing cards and acrylic on paper, 43 ½"x30", 2022
- Untitled 5 (Self-Portrait), Playing cards and acrylic on paper, 36"x18", 2022
- Untitled 6 (Self-Portrait #2), Playing cards and acrylic on paper, 22"x16", 2022
- Untitled 7 (Self-Portrait #3), Playing cards and acrylic on paper, 22"x 16", 2022
- Wondering, Playing cards and acrylic on wood panel, 24" x 24", 2021



Basquiat, Mixed media, 36" x 48", 2019

Inspired by the idiom “to play the cards you’re dealt,” Rashawn Penister incorporates literal playing cards into mixed media works that explore how our circumstances and choices shape our lives. Penister fills his pieces with overlapping, often frenetic patterns both in his backgrounds and throughout the forms of his subjects, influenced by the geometric patterns found in art and textiles across Africa. Included in several backgrounds are floral patterns reminiscent of Kehinde Wiley’s repurposed Baroque embellishments, a nod to the artist that serves a similar purpose of providing Penister’s layered environments with a level of ornamentation and beauty historically reserved for white subjects. His portraits feature both well-known figures, like Miles Davis and Kendrick Lamar, and anonymous subjects, situating the average person amongst the aspirational who have played their cards well. By isolating his subjects within these ornamented spaces, Penister comments on the private nature of our journeys and invites our introspection.

Jessica Lenehan
Curator



The Arts & Science Center has three aspects of collecting and exhibition: art of the Delta, art by Arkansas artists, and art by African American artists.

ASC is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, a distinction held by fewer than 4% of museums in the United States.

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