

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Alvaro Barrington
91-98 jfk-lax border

Blum & Poe, Los Angeles
March 12–April 30, 2022

Opening reception: Saturday, March 12, 2–8pm
RSVP required to attend, more info [here](#).

Los Angeles, CA, February 24, 2022— Blum & Poe is pleased to present Brooklyn and London-based artist Alvaro Barrington's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles.

91-98 jfk-lax border

This exhibition is my thank-you to some of my heroes.

When the bro Chadwick Boseman died, so many of us felt a huge pain and deep loss. People cried because a fictional king had died. It made me think of how I can't even imagine the pain a generation must have felt when a real king—Dr. King, Malcolm, and the Panthers—got taken from us. A community that really needed love and support saw Reaganomics and new Jim Crows, along with other new systems of hate, take hold. For many in that generation, the reasonable option to self-medicate through disco and cocaine turned into the crack epidemic, and needle sharing exasperated the new HIV virus.

A generation who saw the pain in the eyes and the souls of their mothers, fathers, aunties, uncles, and neighbors began to reimagine how to address these issues when the larger structural solution was locking us up. In L.A., Dr. Dre and Snoop made the less dangerous chronic cool. They told us to put on jimmy hats, and—10 million records later—my generation started smoking up and wrapping up. Snoop, Dre, and the chronic saved a generation.

In N.Y.C., they said Giuliani cleaned up the city, which is wild because every kid I know knew we needed to change this generational curse. We started smoking up, and they came and locked everyone up. Humans need a sense of self-worth and a sense of dignity. A generation returned from jail with wild scars: people saw their family members gunned down in front of them; Latasha Harlins was murdered; and 90 percent of women are sexually assaulted before they get locked up. In some prisons, one half of the men have been sexually assaulted—trauma on trauma, put in a box.

When these folks came out, Biggie, JAY-Z, and Lil' Kim gave us the commandments to get fly and carry our heads high. Pac told us to keep our heads up. When he was taken, DMX carried the torch to make us bark, pray, and cry. Mary J made us say we need real love. Ghostface took his darkest moment and made us use the newspaper—made us want to ground our souls and reach for the skies. Magazines and the press people, with only profits in their mind, claimed to love the culture; they made millions of dollars telling the West and East Coast that we were at war on the ground. The only real narrative was that we saved each other.

L.A., thank you.

– Alvaro Barrington

Alvaro (cadet) Barrington (b. 1983, Caracas, Venezuela)

Biography

Figuring it out is hard and I'm sorry
Everything I experience is real
Sometimes the safest place I feel is sleeping on the streets
Latasha Harlins
It's your job
Consider the source
Wish we grew up on the same advice
Arbitrary geopolitical cousins fight political identity
Embodied knowledge
Practicing Trust
For the CULTURE/
If you were them, You would be them/
LISTEN/
Play your part don't let the position play you
Emotional moron but he isn't evil
Them "ALL THAT I GOT IS YOU" days
Hip-hop is not the problem our reality is the problem
We shall overcome... We gonna be alright
Fight the power
Residue of racism
Where there is lions there are vultures
Cultural confidence
They get accustomed to the sweet tooth
The enslaved
Shack poor
We are all just walking each other home
Concept Albums
Whatever the fuck is whatever da fuck
Ok, Sorry/
It's my flesh that holds on to facts, It's my spirit that holds on to truth/
She riding dick on her tippy toes/
Trauma looping/
The culture sometimes bigger than the charts
The liquor store closer than the mosques
People come in with the platform for their own questions more than to sit and listen
The art lies in concealing the art
Public squalor and private opulence
Painting in the service of ideas
Socializing risk/privatizing profits
It was all a dream
More conscious of the way we raise our daughters

About Blum & Poe

Blum & Poe was founded by Tim Blum and Jeff Poe in Santa Monica in September of 1994 as a space to show local and international contemporary art in all media. Blum's extensive experience in the Japanese art world combined with Poe's keen knowledge of emerging artists in Los Angeles resulted in an international program of influential artists. Throughout a twenty-seven-year history, Blum & Poe has shaped the trajectory of contemporary art by championing artists at all stages of their careers—cultivating the lineages that run between emerging and established practices and working with artist estates to generate new discourse surrounding historical work. Currently, Blum & Poe represents fifty artists and nine estates from sixteen countries worldwide.

In 2003 the gallery moved to a larger space in Culver City, and in 2009 Blum & Poe purchased and renovated its current 22,000-square foot complex on La Cienega Boulevard. In this location the gallery has since staged museum-caliber surveys, examining the historical work of such movements as the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of 1980s and '90s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); and a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020). To produce these exhibitions, Blum & Poe has worked with celebrated curators such as Alison M. Gingeras, Sofia Gotti, Joan Kee, and Mika Yoshitake.

In 2014, Blum & Poe opened galleries in New York and Tokyo to focus on intimately scaled projects in new contexts. These expansions tie into the gallery's wide-reaching program that includes exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. Blum & Poe's publishing division democratically circulates its program through original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, to artists' books. In 2020, the gallery launched Blum & Poe Broadcasts, an online platform showcasing artists' projects in conjunction with physical installations or as standalone digital endeavors.

Across the three global locations, Blum & Poe prioritizes environmental and community stewardship in all operations. In 2015, Blum & Poe was certified as an Arts:Earth Partnership (AEP) green art gallery in Los Angeles and consequently became one of the first green certified galleries in the United States. The gallery is also a member of the Gallery Climate Coalition, which works to facilitate a more sustainable commercial art world and reduce the industry's collective carbon footprint. Blum & Poe is committed to fostering inclusive and equitable communities both in their physical and online spaces and believes that everybody should have equal access to creating and engaging with contemporary art.

Press Inquiries

Nicoletta Beyer
Communications and Editorial Director, Los Angeles
nicoletta@blumandpoe.com

BLUM & POE

Los Angeles, New York, Tokyo

Christie Hayden
Communications and Social Media Editor, Los Angeles
christie@blumandpoe.com

Follow Blum & Poe

 @blumandpoe

 @blumandpoe

 @blumandpoe