

PRESS RELEASE

Tschabalala Self

My House

Art Basel Paris 2024

Preview, October 16 – 17

Public Days, October 18 – 20

Booth B37, Grand Palais, Paris

Galerie Eva Presenhuber is pleased to present *My House*, a solo booth with works by Harlem-born artist Tschabalala Self, including two figure sculptures, several paintings, and functional art objects in the form of furniture.

Self states about the presentation: "My work explores the emotional, physical, and psychological impact of the Black female body as an icon, and is primarily dedicated to examining the intersectionality of race, gender, and sexuality. Collective fantasies surrounding the Black body have created a cultural niche in which our contemporary understanding of Black femininity exists. My practice is dedicated to naming this phenomenon. This current body of work is concerned with the iconographic significance of the Black female body in contemporary culture.

In *My House*, I pay homage to a fictional Parisian woman of African descent. Its subject is a woman, in her own home and wearing intimates. The installation borders on the theatrical, imploring the visual and formal aspects of set design. Borrowing from the post-impressionistic aesthetics of modernist French painters, such as Henri Matisse, I created an uncanny environment depicting a mock-home. This home houses my quotidian figure, an imagined woman, living somewhere between the present time and our shared historical imagination.

In terms of history and representations of Black femininity, one historical figure has continued to influence my practice. Her name was Sarah Baartman (1789-1816), better known as the *Venus Hottentot*. Baartman, who traveled to Europe from South Africa, was trafficked, and after her death in 1816, her skeleton, genitals, and an assortment of other body parts were displayed in what became the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. Her body remained on display until the 1970s, and her remains were not repatriated to South Africa until 2002.

My House is deeply inspired by my desire for Baartman to have lived a different life, one in which she was in control of both her environment and her own body. My presentation, in many ways, attempts to imagine an alternate universe where such a reality could have been true. The sculptural works in my presentation are inspired by the silhouette and physique of Baartman, a true Black beauty who was not allowed to live freely as a Parisian woman two centuries ago. I refer to a number of Francophile aesthetics in my presentation to root my project in the Parisian landscape.

In general, my practice seeks to redirect misconceptions propagated within and projected onto the Black body, while creating space for new narratives. Blackness is not an island, but a lived experience with many intercultural intersections, as articulated by the life and legacy of Baartman. *My House* explores Black femininity from a Pan-Africanist perspective in relation to current and past representations of the Black female body in Parisian visual culture."

Tschabalala Self was born in 1990 in Harlem, NY, and lives and works in New York State. Recent solo exhibitions in museums and public institutions include EMMA – Espoo Museum of Modern Art, Espoo, FI (2024); FLAG Foundation, New York, NY, US (2024); Swiss Institute, New York, NY, US (2024); CC Strombeek, Grimbergen, BE (2023); Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, St. Gallen, CH (2023); Consortium Museum, Dijon, FR (2022); Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD, US (2021); ICA Boston, Boston, MA, US (2020); and Hammer Museum, CA, Los Angeles, CA, US (2019). Furthermore Self has participated in numerous group exhibitions at Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Houston, TX, US (2024); The Shah Garg Foundation, New York, NY; US (2023), Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA, US (2023); ARKEN Museum of Modern Art, Ishøj, DK (2022); Kunsthalle Duesseldorf, Duesseldorf, DE (2021); Haus der Kunst, Munich, DE (2021); Brooklyn Museum, New York, NY, US (2021), Hannover Kunstverein, Hannover, DE (2020); Irish

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Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, IE (2019); Rubell Museum, Miami, FL, US (2019); Philadelphia Art Museum, Philadelphia, PA, US (2019); Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego, CA, US (2019); MoMA PS1, New York, NY, US (2019); Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw, PL (2019); Jewish Museum, San Francisco, CA, US (2019); Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Raleigh, AR, US (2018); Centre Régional d'Art Contemporain Occitanie/Pyrénées-Méditerranée, Sète, FR (2018); and Trigger, New Museum, New York, NY, US (2017).

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