

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 (b. 1990), including two figure sculptures, several paintings, and functional art objects in the form of furniture.

"My body of work is concerned with the iconographic significance of the Black female body in contemporary culture. It explores the emotional, physical and psychological impact of the Black woman's body as an icon, and is primarily devoted to examining the intersectionality of race, gender and sexuality. Collective fantasies surround the Black body and have created a cultural niche in which our contemporary understanding of Black femininity exists. My practice is dedicated to naming this phenomenon.

In *My House*, my project for Art Basel Paris, I pay homage to a fictional Parisian woman of African descent, the protagonist of the presentation. She is set in her own home, wearing intimates. The booth's installation borders on the theatrical, employing the visual and formal aspects of set design, borrowing from the post-impressionistic aesthetics of modernist French painters, such as Henri Matisse. The uncanny environment references a mock-home. This fabrication houses my quotidian figure, an imagined woman, living somewhere between the present time and our shared historical imagination. She is seen in two states – standing and sitting. The repetition of her form alludes to her movement.

In regard to history and depictions Black femininity, one historical figure has continued to influence my practice. Her name was Sarah Baartman (1789–1815), more famously known as the "Venus Hottentot". Ms. Baartman, who traveled to Europe from South Africa, was trafficked, and after her death in 1815 her skeleton, genitals, and an assortment of other body parts were placed on view at what would become the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. Her body remained on view until the 1970s and her remains were not returned to South Africa until 2002. *My House* is deeply inspired by my desire for Sara Baartman to have lived a different life, where she was in control of both her environment and her own body. My presentation, in many ways, tries 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 Ms. Baartman, a true Black beauty, who, two centuries before, was not allowed to live freely as a Parisian woman. I reference a number of Francophile aesthetics in my presentation to root my project within the Parisian visual landscape.

Baartman's image is conflated with that of other Black Parisians, such as Josephine Baker. Pointing to the complex realities for Black creatives in Paris historically – the tension between their objectification and humanization. Paris, for some, offered an escape from racial tyranny, while for others, it was the location of great radicalized abuse. *My House* examines the real and fantastical interpretations of Black femininity within a Parisian context.

Overall, my practice aspires to redirect misconceptions propagated within and projected upon the Black body while simultaneously generating space for new narratives. Blackness is not an island, but a lived experience that has many intercultural intersections, as articulated by the life and legacy of Sara Baartman. *My House* will explore Black femininity from a pan-Africanist perspective as it relates to the present and past representations of the Black female body in Parisian visual culture."

Tschabalala Self

GALERIE EVA PRESENHUBER

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 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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