

new. now. 24

On view February 10–March 16, 2024

Opening reception: Saturday, February 10, 2024, 5–7pm
1353 U St NW, Washington, DC 20009

Washington, DC: Hamiltonian Artists is pleased to present *new.now.*, our annual group exhibition debuting the work of Hamiltonian's distinguished 2023–2025 fellows: artists **Ali Kaeini, Hien Kat Nguyen, Neha Misra, and Kat Thompson**. Each year, *new.now.* serves as a snapshot of the newest Hamiltonian Artists fellows' creative practices, exhibiting the work they plan to expand upon during their two-year fellowship.

This year the group exhibition will present artworks that recontextualize cultural, religious, and political symbols and signifiers. Across painting, sculpture, photography and games, each artist conjures a distinctive visual language in which icons, objects, images and materials are given new meaning.

While each artist's work is grounded within the concerns and conditions of modern life, their roots are embedded within ancient traditions, intergenerational legacies and lore. Inspired by Iranian tales and Islamic architecture, Ali Kaeini's monumental works on raw canvas traverse between representation and abstraction—pulling viewers into an ornate, liminal space occupied by childlike curiosities and unsettling disarray. Hien Kat Nguyen's sculptures deploy juxtapositions and allegories that grapple with the implications of Vietnamese American identity and first-generation cultural assimilation. Kat Thompson's photo-based works weave a tapestry of cultural hybridity that illuminates a slippery space somewhere between the South and the Caribbean, challenging viewers to consider the nuances of Black belonging in an ever-shifting diasporic landscape. In the spirit of possibility and play, Neha Misra's paintings look to the horizon and bird flock migration patterns. Through beauty and poetics, Misra calls us to envision our “more than human world” through a lens of hope, empathy, and solidarity.

In conversation, the exhibited artworks will highlight the universality of storytelling and symbolism, and their innate potential as tools for cultivating common ground. Here, past and persisting tensions are brought to the surface—and still, tender embrace is within reach.

The 2023–2025 Fellows were selected by an independent jury of arts professionals—**Amir Byron Browder**, curator and founder of HOMME, Washington, DC; **Michele Carlson**, artist, writer, and professor at George Washington University's Corcoran School of the Arts and Design; **Safiyah Cheatam**, artist and cultural worker; **Cynthia Hodge-Thorne**, art historian and recent Curatorial Fellow at Baltimore Museum of Art; and **Helina Metaferia**, interdisciplinary artist, Assistant Professor of Visual Art at Brown University's Department of Visual Art, and Hamiltonian Artists fellowship alum.

An in person artist talk will be presented at Hamiltonian Artists; more details to be announced. Visit Hamiltonian Artists' [website](#) and follow [@hamiltonian_artists](#) on Instagram for more information about corresponding public programs.



left to right: Ali Kaeini, Neha Misra, Hien Kat Nguyen, and Kat Thompson

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Ali Kaeini (he/him) is an Iranian artist and earned his Master of Fine Arts in Painting and Printmaking from Virginia Commonwealth University and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, New York, NY, in 2019. His paintings reflect a religious society in turmoil, and the ancient civilization that has shaped his upbringing. The visual tension and displacement of ancient relics and designs within his art convey his own immigration story—a fusion of belonging and non-belonging. His art has been featured in solo and group exhibitions in the US, Europe, and the Middle East, including being a finalist for the Trawick Contemporary Art Award in Bethesda in 2022 and at the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, Virginia Beach, VA.

Hien Kat Nguyen (they/them) was born and raised in Saigon, Vietnam, and is currently living in Richmond, Virginia. They earned their Bachelor of Fine Arts in Sculpture + Extended Media from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2022. Through woodworking and 3D fabrication techniques, Nguyen creates installations and game-like sculptures that facilitate interaction and use humor to approach taboo subjects surrounding assimilation experiences. They have attended residencies at Anderson Ranch Arts Center, Snowmass Village, CO; Peters Valley School of Craft, Sandyston, NJ; and the Visual Arts Center of Richmond, Richmond, VA. They were the recipient of the Windgate–Lamar Fellowship from the Center for Craft, Asheville, NC, and the Undergraduate Fellowship in Sculpture from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA. Nguyen has shown work at the Visual Arts Center of Richmond and the Anderson; Richmond, VA.

Neha Misra नेहा मिश्रा (she/her) is a contemporary eco-folk artist, poet, and an award-winning climate justice advocate. Misra's creative practice centers her Global Majority lineage as a first-generation, multi-lingual immigrant woman from New Delhi, India, who calls a solar-powered community in the Washington metro region her adopted home. She has been honored as a Presidential Leadership Scholar, and as a Regenerative Artist by the Design Science Studio—a partnership of the Buckminster Fuller Institute and habRitual for leading planet conscious artists. Misra is a 2022 fellow of the Public Voices Fellowship on the Climate Crisis, an initiative of the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, the OpEd Project, and Ann MacDougal, to change who writes history.



Kat Thompson (she/her) is a multidisciplinary Afro-Jamaican American artist based in Virginia, who works in photography, textile, sculptural collage, and installation. She earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography from George Mason University and her Master of Fine Arts in Photography and Film from Virginia Commonwealth University. Her work combines these mediums to explore notions of Black selfhood within the African Diaspora. Her work has been exhibited at the Fenwick Gallery and the Gillespie Gallery of Art at George Mason University, and the Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art, Reston, VA. She was the 2021–2022 recipient of the Young Alumni Commissioning Award from George Mason University's College of Visual and Performing Arts.

ABOUT HAMILTONIAN ARTISTS

Hamiltonian Artists' mission is to build a dynamic community of innovative artists and effective visual art leaders by providing professional development opportunities to early-career artists and by advancing their entrepreneurial success. In 2007, Paul So, an avid painter and a physics professor at George Mason University, founded Hamiltonian Artists and Hamiltonian Gallery with the vision of creating an innovative career incubator program for emerging visual artists. In 2019, the Board of Directors of Hamiltonian Artists chose to merge the two organizations into a single 501c3 nonprofit to better serve the mission.

Today, Hamiltonian Artists is a dynamic catalyst for DC's creative economy and a vibrant center for contemporary art in Washington, DC. Through its unique investment into the next generation of cutting-edge artists, Hamiltonian helps artists to develop important business skills, professional experiences, and visibility to support and sustain their art career. Through a two-year artist fellowship, artist talks, public events and its membership program, the organization contributes to the vitality of DC's burgeoning arts scene by deepening the appreciation for contemporary art and culture throughout Washington, DC, and beyond.

HOW TO VISIT

The exhibition is on view at Hamiltonian Artists, 1353 U Street NW, Washington, DC 20009.

Gallery hours: Thursday–Saturday, 11am–6pm.

For more information please visit www.hamiltonianartists.org.

CONTACT

For press inquiries and additional info contact Anisa Olufemi, Fellowship Manager.

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