

Press Release

HAIRITAGE

Curated by **Favour Ritaro**

On view:

November 18th - December 18th, 2023

Tuesdays - Fridays 10 am - 5 pm

Saturdays 11 am - 6 pm

Opening Reception: **November 18th, 5 - 8pm EST**

Location:

DeKalb Gallery, Pratt Institute

DeKalb Hall, 331 Dekalb Ave, Brooklyn, NY 11205



David Orrell, *The Pencil Test II*, 2021, Photography

Featuring work by:

Adebunmi Gbadebo - David Orrell - Jade Rodgers - DeJeonge Reese

Hairitage is a group exhibition exploring the role of Black hair in Black and African American identity and examines historical racial discrimination and contemporary significance of Black hair in the United States.

Through thematic exploration of identity, memory, community, racism, and resistance, the presented works offer a nuanced examination of the politics of Black hair and how deep rooted systems of oppression have shaped the prejudicial treatment of Black people from the slavery era to present-day America.

Adebunmi Gbadebo uses Black hair collected from people from the African Diaspora to investigate the complexities between land and memory in the American South. David Orrell's *Taji* series started as an exploration of his own identity and further developed into an inquiry of the role of Black hair in identity formation. While he was inspired by J.D. Okhai Ojeikere and his photographic exploration of unique hairstyles found throughout Africa, David's inquiry led to uncovering current systematic racism against Black people. Jade Rodgers highlights Black hair care practices that have been used for generations. Rogers pushes for a reclamation of power and self-worth, and against subjugation of the Black body. Dejeonge's *Hair Quilt* is inspired by the history of quilts in African American culture and is a beautiful and powerful tribute to the ways in which they have used their hair and other cultural traditions to resist oppression and find freedom.

By highlighting the collective personal experiences of Black and African American artists and students at Pratt Institute in New York, *Hairitage* presents a common ground for addressing entangled histories. It celebrates ways people have reclaimed their hair as a symbol of pride and empowerment.

Hairitage is an apexart NYC Open Call Exhibition. For more information on the exhibition and related events, email visit apexart.org/ritaro2.php or email ash.hagerstrand@apexart.org.

Favour Ritaro is a Nigerian curator whose practice explores ideas that challenge and enhance our understanding of the past. Her curatorial purview critically views representations of personal and cultural identities, nationhood, gender, and sexuality.

apexart's program supporters past and present include the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, the Kettering Family Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Buhl Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Spencer Brownstone, the Kenneth A. Cowin Foundation, Epstein Teicher Philanthropies, The Greenwich Collection Ltd., William Talbott Hillman Foundation/Affirmation Arts Fund, the Fifth Floor Foundation, The Puffin Foundation, the Trust for Mutual Understanding, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, public funds from Creative Engagement, supported by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and administered by LMCC, funds from NYSCA Electronic Media/Film in Partnership with Wave Farm: Media Arts Assistance Fund, with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, as well as the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the New York State Legislature.

#HAIRITAGE

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