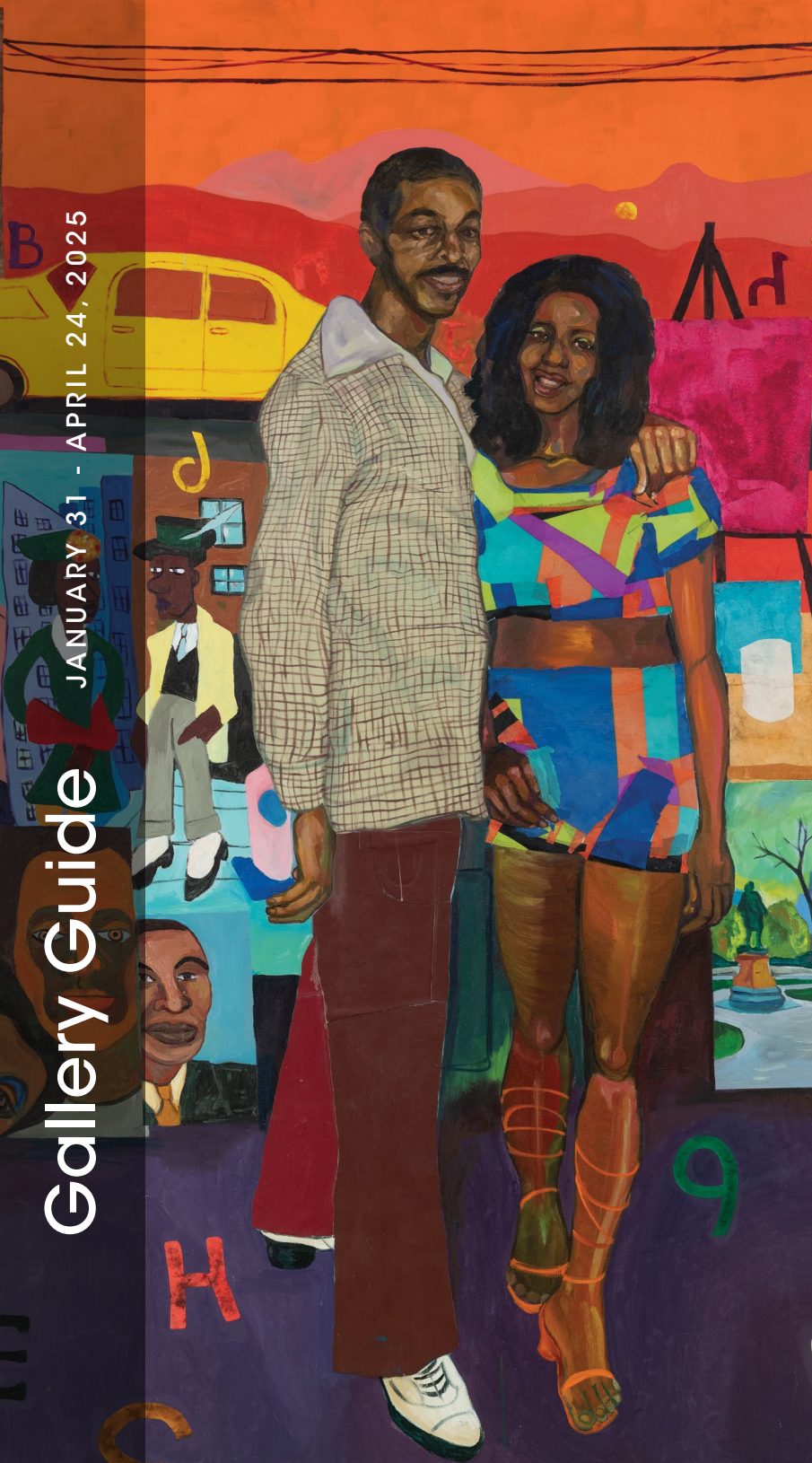


# Gallery Guide

JANUARY 31 - APRIL 24, 2025



# AMERICAN GURL

OCTOBER 4, 2024 -  
APRIL 13, 2025

CURATED BY ZEHRA ZEHRA & KILO KISH

## ARTISTS FEATURED

Ayanna Dozier

Savanah Leaf

Martine Syms

Ja'Tovia Gary

LaJuné McMillian

Carrie Mae Weems

Kilo Kish

Lorna Simpson

The “American girl” embodies success, beauty, and adventure, yet questions remain about who can claim this ideal and partake in the American Dream. The *American GURL* project reimagines this figure through the lens of Black women, examining intersections of culture, spirituality, and politics.

The exhibition asks, “How do we redefine the American Dream to include women of color?” Featuring eight intergenerational artists, the works explore spirituality, innocence, and rest. From Kilo Kish’s video piece that critiques the entertainment industry’s pressures on artists to Carrie Mae Weems’s celebration of the joy every Black girl should feel, to Ja’Tovia Gary’s response to Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, *American GURL* offers a nuanced, polyvocal reflection on identity, freedom, and the nation, inviting viewers to reimagine the archetype of the American woman.

Kilo Kish, Still from *Death Fantasy*, 2022, Courtesy of the artist.





YoYo Lander, *Nothing to Hide*, 2020, Stained, washed, and collaged watercolor paper on watercolor paper, 20 x 16 inches, Courtesy of Terrell Tilford & Family.

# YoYo

*between the quiet*

## LANDER

---

Selected Works from 2019 to 2024

**JANUARY 31 -  
MAY 11, 2025**

**ORGANIZED BY THE HARVEY B. GANTT CENTER**

Known for her portraits of solitary African diasporic subjects, contemporary artist YoYo Lander captures visual form via a psychological and empathetic drive to understand her subjects, not only through the features of their physical bodies but also through moments in which introspection prompts them to most fully reveal themselves. As a self-taught painter and collagist, Lander highlights the multifacetedness of Black identity while also exploring the expressive aspects of the human figure through which gesture, line, posture, and color convey meaning.

Her first mid-career retrospective, *YoYo Lander: Between the Quiet, Selected Works from 2019-2024*, presents a curated selection of figurative and experimental abstract collages from private and public collections around the country. The exhibition invites viewers to reflect on vulnerability and the concept of presence while showcasing the ideological depth with which Lander approaches image-making.

# Cherry

**KHALIF TAHIR THOMPSON**

**JANUARY 31 –  
AUGUST 17, 2025**

**ORGANIZED BY THE HARVEY B. GANTT CENTER**

*Cherry*, Khalif Tahir Thompson's first institutional solo exhibition in the United States, features eight large-scale paintings that explore themes related to identity, memory, and emotion. Fusing nostalgia with contemporary energy, Thompson creates layered works that draw from personal experiences, family archives, and cultural narratives, inviting viewers into intimate and reflective spaces.

Thompson redefines portraiture as an evolving story, blending figuration and abstraction in imaginative environments. Many figures are inspired by photographs from his grandmother's albums, with handwritten annotations revealing names, places, and moments that shaped the past. These notes, woven into the background of his paintings, connect past and present while influencing Thompson's subconscious approach to text as a visual element.

Influenced by 20th century modernists like Romare Bearden and Jacob Lawrence, Thompson uses collage to combine organic shapes and vivid palettes, dynamically depicting Black American life. *Cherry* celebrates the complexity of the human experience, weaving personal and historical stories into a rich tapestry of meaning.

Khalif Tahir Thompson, *Playing Ball*, 2024, Oil, acrylic, fabric, pleather, papyrus, handmade paper (abaca, cotton), plastic, collage on canvas, 63 x 90 inches, Courtesy of Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery.



# Forget Me Not

Archival photographs of everyday Black Americans  
from the late 1800s to the early 1900s.

CURATED BY KIMBERLY ANNECE HENDERSON

Modeled after the popular Instagram project @emalineandthem, these digitized photographs immerse the viewer in the visual histories of everyday Black Americans. The original photographs - some over one hundred years old - are preserved at collecting institutions across America, and beautifully illustrate the breadth of the Black experience that transcends time.

The inspiration for this work is revealed in a note from the curator, Kimberly Annece Henderson:

*"On my mother's side, I gasped when I found an American Revolutionary War pension record for one of many great grandfathers way back when. On my father's side, my stomach sank at the sight of an 1866 Freedmen's Bureau contract for the guaranteed servitude of another. In piecing together different narratives for their lives, perhaps my existence is the poetic device here."*

Unidentified Photographer, *Portrait of Richard and Mary Wilson*, c. 1905, Photograph, Courtesy of The Photographs of William Bullard.





## About the Gantt




Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture is a multidisciplinary arts institution located in the heart of Charlotte, North Carolina. Founded in 1974, the Gantt's mission is to present, preserve, and celebrate excellence in the art, history, and culture of African-Americans and those of African descent through visual and literary arts, dance, music, film, educational programs, theatre productions, and community outreach. The Gantt features fine art exhibitions from around the world and is home to the nationally celebrated John and Vivian Hewitt Collection of African-American Art, which was generously donated by Bank of America, and is accessible online.

Named for Charlotte civic leader and former mayor Harvey Bernard Gantt, the Gantt is housed in an iconic, award-winning structure designed by architect Philip Freelon, co-designer of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC).



**Harvey B. Gantt Center**  
for African-American Arts+Culture

AT LEVINE CENTER FOR THE ARTS  
551 SOUTH TRYON ST • CHARLOTTE, NC  
704.547.3700 • GANTTCENTER.ORG

   @HBGANTTCENTER

 **KNIGHT  
FOUNDATION**

 North  
Carolina  
Arts  
Council

 CITY OF  
CHARLOTTE

**COVER ARTWORK CREDIT** Khalif Tahir Thompson, *Lenox Avenue*, 2024, Oil, acrylic, fabric, pleather, handmade paper (abaca, cotton), collage on canvas, 94.5 x 66.875 inches, Courtesy of Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery.