

Miguel Ángel Payano Jr makes his debut at Unit London with 'Limbuistics'



Unit London will present a new body of work from the artist Miguel Ángel Payano Jr. this November. This bold exhibition will include 17 works, 15 of which will be shown for the first time. Drawing on his Caribbean heritage, training in New England and decades spent in China, Payano's work reflects how his identity has shifted and expanded along the way, collapsing and combining these different worlds. In April 2023, Payano was the focus of a major profile in *The New York Times* titled 'An Uptown Cat Became a Chinese Artist. Then He Returned Home' by Siddhartha Mitter.

Payano's subjects are caught between multiple realms, in immersive compositions where hallucinatory worlds weave in and out of each other, exploding in vibrant colour. He is known for works which blend the human body with nature, with figures that are intertwined with landscapes where ape-like creatures are captured alongside natural motifs including butterflies and bees, with mouths that grow into ripe peaches on branches. These works make use of a range of different materials, including real snakeskin, rabbit fur, and human hair, for a symbiotic blend of texture and composition.

'Limbuistics' represents a play on the words 'linguistics' and 'limbs,' with Payano explaining that he wanted to use language as a further refinement of the 'vernacular' of his practice- a practice that is in many ways informed by culturally disparate art canons. The new collection represents a continuation of Payano's signature style and technique while integrating a greater emphasis on Chinese folklore and mythology. Payano explores the myth of the 'Peaches of Immortality,' in which a smaller variety of peaches blossom every 3,000 years and provide higher wisdom and longer life to whosoever consumes one. This new exhibition will also see the incorporation of monkeys into Payano's work, as monkeys have played significant roles in Chinese culture for over 2,000 years. And, perhaps most significantly, Payano has begun casting his own hand as part of the evolution of his practice and the development of Parkinson's Disease, which was revealed in a 2020 diagnosis.

The exhibition will be on display at Unit London's Hanover Square gallery from November 7th-December 19th. Payano is available for interviews and exhibition tours upon request. He will be in London for an extended period of time while he participates in an artist residency with PLOP.

Image credits, from top to bottom:

Image courtesy of Miguel Ángel Payano Jr (*Blueberry Sunset*)

Image credit: Elias Williams for *The New York Times*

About the Artist



Miguel Ángel Payano Jr. (b. 1980) is an Afro-Caribbean American visual artist born in New York. He completed a BA at Williams College in Chinese Language and Studio Art in Williamstown, Massachusetts (2003); an MFA in Oil Painting from Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing (2008) and an MFA in Studio Art from Hunter College, CUNY, New York (2020). Heavily influenced by American,

Caribbean, and Chinese cultures, Payano's mixed media works investigate themes of identity-formation and class.

Throughout his career, Payano has exhibited extensively with notable shows at Orlando Museum in Florida, Eastville Museum in New York, Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara in California and Ad-Diriyah Biennale in Saudi Arabia. Recent solo exhibitions include *Sojourn Summits*, Galleria Poggiali, Milano (2022); *Elusive Nature*, Make Room, Los Angeles (2021) and *Miguel Ángel Payano Jr.*, Charles Moffett, New York (2021). Selected group exhibitions include 1-54 Art Fair with Galleria Poggiali, London; *NADA*, Charles Moffett, Miami; and *Universes*, Curator S. Bogojev, Droste Gallery, Paris (2021). Payano currently lives and works between Beijing and New York.

About Unit London

Established in September 2013, Unit London is a global artistic platform for international artists. The co-founders, Joe Kennedy and Jonny Burt, have successfully launched and advanced the careers of numerous contemporary artists, and they remain firmly committed to their driving principles of equity, innovation, and accessibility. The gallery is forthright in its dedication to being an open and transparent institution at the forefront of an expanding and diversifying art industry. As a consequence of its boldly independent approach to the gallery model, Unit London has become synonymous with a pioneering use of social media and digital content – bridging the gap between the physical and virtual spheres of modern experience and connecting people with the art they love.

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