



For Immediate Release May 2024

FAMILY, IDENTITY, & CULTURE: PAINTINGS BY JOHN HUNTER

*A New Queens College Exhibition, "Family, Identity & Culture: Paintings by John Hunter,"
Explores Personal and Universal Truths through Works Expressing Mourning and Celebration,
May 30 – August 8, 2024*



Dassa Zoume 1, Benin, 2018 Oil on canvas
Godwin-Ternbach Museum, Gift of John Hunter, 2024.2.34



Boukombé, Benin, 2018 Oil on canvas
Collection of Jerri Sherman, New York

"Family, Identity & Culture" reveals the breadth and vitality of John Hunter's artistic expression over a twenty-year period.

May 8, 2024, Flushing, NY — A new retrospective exhibition at Godwin-Ternbach Museum (GTM) at Queens College (City University of New York), *"Family, Identity & Culture,"* features fifty outstanding oil paintings and works on paper by John Hunter, an artist based in Oaxaca, Mexico, and New York City. The exhibition will be on view from May 30 – August 8, 2024. A reception open to the public will take place on Thursday, May 30, from 6 to 8pm, at 405 Klapper Hall, Queens College.

Paintings and drawings by John Hunter explore his identity as an African American gay man, an incredibly accomplished artist, as well as a Renaissance scholar, curator, and author. Mining the history of his immediate family from photographs, he has explored complicated cultural tropes of race and identity. Immersed in his study of modernist artists such as Henri Matisse, Max Beckmann, Pablo Picasso, and Paul Cezanne, among others, Hunter has absorbed all the lessons of Post-Impressionism, Cubism, and Expressionism, filtered through his own artistic and cultural sensibility. Working in a serial fashion for the past twenty years, as well as portraying Hunter's own immediate relatives, his "familia" extends to lovers and friends in adulthood. Other works, deeply felt portraits of people photographed on a trip to Ghana, Togo, and Benin, reunited him with his African ancestors. Extending beyond the Western art canon, Hunter's singular

concerns are realized in massively appealing works of saturated color and plush brush work. Everyone has a family, and we are now part of John Hunter's.



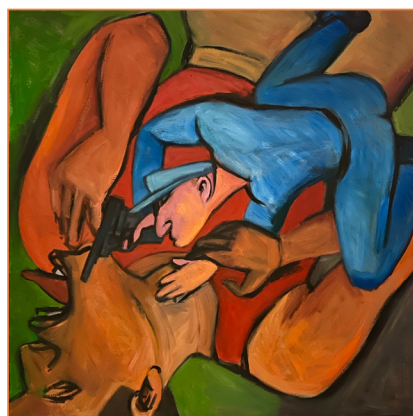
"Since I am African American, I began to cast my gaze in the direction of fellow people of color. This decision has determined the bulk of the painting I have done for the past twenty years culminating in the series of portraits made from photographs that I made during a visit to the countries in West Africa of Ghana, Togo, and Benin. There was another subject, though, that I had hesitated to address—gay life. As a gay married man, I wanted to express my sexual orientation and depict the life that I had lived. This has been a driving impulse that has not only determined what I paint but how it reflects the gay gaze. The Familia paintings, Dance in the Garden, and In Hoc Signo Florebit all represent gay life as I've experienced it."

In Hoc Signo Florebit, Oil on canvas
Godwin-Ternbach Museum, Gift of John Hunter, 2024.2.5

In the spirit of the commitment to DEI of City University of New York and Queens College, GTM has been actively dedicated to amplifying the voices of BIPOC and women artists in service of the museum's exhibitions and education programs. Additionally, GTM is in search of these works to add to its encyclopedic permanent collection of 7,000 objects and works of art. In the collection's 19th and 20th century holdings, many works are seen through the lens of Western and Eurocentric art traditions. The opportunity to share the paintings of John Hunter this summer eminently fulfills the criteria for challenging work that GTM wishes to expose student populations to (and by extension, larger communities both local and global). Happily, John Hunter has generously donated an incredible body of 200 paintings and numerous works on paper for the benefit of GTM and selected entities of QC's campus community, as well as a personal library of art books and monographs.



Constant Gardener, 2012 Oil on canvas. Collection Godwin-Ternbach Museum,
Gift of John Hunter, 2024.2.22 A - D



(left) *Kimani Had a Gun*, 2012 Oil on canvas.
Collection Godwin-Ternbach Museum,
Gift of John Hunter, 2024.2.1

(right) *Darius Must Die*, 2012 Oil on canvas.
Collection Godwin-Ternbach Museum,
Gift of John Hunter, 2024.2.2

Family, Identity, and Culture: Paintings by John Hunter neatly bookends with the magnificent traveling exhibition exhibited at GTM in Fall, 2023, Ubhle Women: Beadwork and the Art of Independence. Finally, the exhibition coincides within the dual events of Pride Month and Queens Rising, both occurring in June 2024.

The exhibition is organized by Louise Weinberg, GTM's co-director, director of exhibitions and collections, and curator. A public opening reception will take place on Thursday, May 30th from 6 pm to 8 pm at the Godwin-Ternbach Museum. Visit www.gtmuseum.org for information, hours, location, and directions to campus.

Generous support for "Family, Identity, & Culture: Paintings by John Hunter" has been provided by Dr. John Hunter and Dr. Harold D. Kooden. Additional funding has been provided by the Friends of the Godwin-Ternbach Museum, Kupferberg Center for the Arts, and Queens College, CUNY. Education programs and initiatives are supported in part by the Milton & Sally Avery Arts Foundation, and public funds from the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with NY City Council. Additional support for the care of the collection is made possible by the Pine Tree Foundation.

About the Godwin-Ternbach Museum

The Godwin-Ternbach Museum, a part of Queens College's Kupferberg Center for the Visual and Performing Arts, presents contemporary and historical exhibitions and programs that provide exciting educational opportunities and aesthetic experiences to the college community and residents of Queens, Manhattan, and Long Island. As the only museum in the CUNY system, and the only encyclopedic collection of art and artifacts in the borough housing over 7,000 global objects that date from ancient to modern times, the museum introduces visitors to works they might not otherwise encounter. Virtual and in-person programs complement and interpret the art on view to serve the needs and interests of local and international communities. All exhibitions and programs are free.

About Queens College

Queens College enjoys a national reputation for its liberal arts and sciences and pre-professional programs. With its graduate and undergraduate degrees, honors programs, and research and internship opportunities, the college helps its students realize their potential in countless ways, assisted by an accessible, award-winning faculty. Located on a beautiful, 80-acre campus in Flushing, the college has been cited by Princeton Review as one of America's Best Value Colleges for five consecutive years, as well as being ranked a U.S. News and World Report Best College and Forbes Magazine Best Value College thanks to its outstanding academics, generous financial aid packages, and relatively low costs. Visit our homepage (www.qc.cuny.edu) to learn more.

For exhibition information and publicity images, please contact Louise Weinberg, louise.weinberg@qc.cuny.edu.

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