



## Marcus Leslie Singleton

### *Diagrams and Dilemmas*

March 5 - April 16, 2022

Opening Reception:

March 5, 2022 | 3 - 6 pm

1228 Normandy Drive, Miami Beach

Featuring 12 works produced over the course of the last four months, this exhibition foregrounds Singleton's characteristic figural subjects, but shines a new and rather prescient light on the scenes of life that take center stage. Though seemingly quotidian upon first inspection, Singleton's paintings of joggers, friends, daily life, and domestic spaces all reveal latent references to the technologies that infect and inflect both public and private domains.

*Staff Meeting* (2022), for example, pictures a topless woman in a darkened

space wearing a VR headset. Though she appears to be alone and at ease, the work's title suggests that she is in fact meeting with colleagues in a professional, albeit virtual, setting. The binaries that characterize this scene—private/public, home/office, casual/professional, physical/virtual—echo the duality that characterizes Black experience in America. Singleton has observed that "Black people in proximity to whiteness often feel the need to augment their appearances to fit into certain spaces" and he strives to illuminate this condition in his paintings—such as *Biology Paper* (2022), and *Excuse Me, Did You Lose Your Phone?* (2022)—by routinely depicting individuals that inhabit multiple spaces or narratives simultaneously.

Inspiring two equally (im)plausible narratives, *Excuse Me, Did You Lose Your Phone?* may be read as a confrontation in which a Black man is racially profiled by a biased algorithm in the form of a robot. However, this scene could alternatively be read as a friendly, antiquated, and even clumsy robot returning a lost phone to its owner. The former narrative illustrates what the artist has termed "quantum racism:" aspects of a probable future wherein AI is used to instrumentalize forms of oppression and deny individuals certain freedoms or access to technological services,

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such as cloud storage, social media, and online banking. However, the latter interpretation— which reflects the artist's original conception of *Excuse Me, Did You Lose Your Phone?*—speaks to his innate optimism and desire to speculate about a wide variety of possible futures.

***Diagrams and Dilemmas*** also includes two still lifes by Singleton: "*Come Downstairs Fo Dinner!!*" (2022) and *Play Marvin Gaye* (2022). Though these paintings do not feature his iconic figures, they nonetheless possess a tangible presence. *Play Marvin Gaye*, which depicts an empty room illuminated by the glow of a HomePod, makes one wonder whether the device is charging, responding to an individual just outside the painting's frame, or acting of its own accord.

Singleton's jovial application of paint to canvas coupled with the scenes he chooses to depict—friends in a deli, a Capri Sun and Game Boy Advance, a woman multi-tasking on her laptop in the front yard—effectively capture widely relatable experiences, and yet serve as a conduit through which the artist can consider what being Black might look like in an increasingly technological future.

## **About the Artist**

Marcus Leslie Singleton (b. 1990, Seattle, Washington) currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. His paintings have been featured in recent solo and group exhibitions at September Gallery, Hudson, NY (2021); University Art Museum, Albany, NY (2021); Superposition Gallery, Amagansett, NY (2021); Steve Turner Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2020); Journal Gallery, New York, NY (2020); SKAVO Gallery Brooklyn, NY (2020); TURN Gallery, New York, NY (2019); and Medium Tings, Brooklyn, NY (2018).