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Launch the New Year with us at The Power Plant and experience three major exhibitions by artists Omar Ba, Shuvinai Ashoona and Alicia Henry this Winter 2019 Season.

On view 26 January to 12 May 2019, The Power Plant presents three immersive exhibitions by artists who draw from deeply personal iconographies to present complex worlds intertwined and shaped by histories and identities to reflect on our past, present and future.

This will be the first solo exhibition in Canada of artists Omar Ba (Senegal/Switzerland) and Alicia Henry (USA). Alongside their works, The Power Plant is pleased to present a major survey by third-generation Inuit artist Shuvinai Ashoona (Nunavut, Canada).

Join us as we launch the season with a FREE Public Opening Party on Friday, 25 January 2019 from 8 - 11PM.

The Power Plant also presents numerous opportunities for all to extend their exhibition experience. Pair a visit to the gallery with a workshop, performance, film screening, artist talk or other activity.

**Details about the exhibitions and programs are below.
Join the conversation online with [@ThePowerPlantTO](#)**

WINTER 2019 SEASON PRESENTING SPONSOR:

The Power Plant
Contemporary Art Gallery

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Omar Ba
Same Dream

Curator: Nabila Abdel Nabi, Associate Curator

Omar Ba’s work engages with some of the most urgent issues of our time: the growing inequality of wealth and power globally, questions around immigration, and our changing relationship with the natural world. His penchant for depicting personal narratives alongside collective ones speaks to the “in-between” condition of his work, as he splits his time between Dakar, Senegal and Geneva, Switzerland, and blends the visual texture of both places through his work. Ba regularly draws from and intertwines a range of elements– the historical and contemporary, figurative and abstract imagery–from African and European cultures, as well as the techniques and tools he employs, including corrugated cardboard and canvas, paintbrushes and his hands. He prepares his surfaces– whether cardboard, canvas or wall–with a black ground, upon which he layers a vivid palette dominated by primary colours. The paintings teem with details as micro-worlds exist within larger constellations, oscillating between bold planes of colour and intricate outlines. Largely symbolic, the figures and forms portrayed refer not to specific individuals, but rather are open to universal narratives.

Same Dream brings together several of Ba’s paintings depicting dictators and authority figures, who lead corrupt and violent regimes across the African continent and in other parts of the world, particularly where the legacies of colonialism persist. At times represented as hybrid beasts–part human, part animal–these despotic warlords are typically enveloped in an abundance of lush flora and fauna. Indeed, nature becomes a continuous force across Ba’s oeuvre. The recurring biomorphic shapes are often inspired by Senegal’s dazzling coastal environment in which Ba grew up. In conversation with this group of paintings, the exhibition also presents works that reveal Ba’s affinity for portraying the strength of the human spirit–depictions of youth who, regardless of where they are, share some of the same dreams for the future. For the exhibition at The Power Plant, Ba has developed a new large-scale work directly on one of the gallery walls, exploring a recurrent motif of birth, death and reincarnation across different cultures today.

The world of Omar Ba’s painting is a hybrid one, ultimately evoking a shared cosmogony between humans, plants and animals.

Same Dream is Omar Ba’s first institutional solo exhibition in North America.

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Shuvinai Ashoona: *Mapping Worlds*

Guest Curator: Dr.Nancy Campbell
 Assistant Curator: Justine Kohleal, RBC Curatorial Fellow 2018 - 2020

The exhibition *Mapping Worlds* features pencil crayon and ink drawings produced by Shuvinai Ashoona over the past two decades. Many of her early drawings depict scenes of Kinngait (formerly known as Cape Dorset, in Nunavut), continuing an artistic tradition begun by the Ashoona family, including her grandmother Pitseolak Ashoona (1904 - 1983) and cousin Annie Pootoogook (1969 - 2016). Living in Kinngait on the southern tip of Baffin Island, Shuvinai Ashoona is part of Canada's Inuit culture. She produces her work at Kinngait Studios, the art arm of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative. Incorporated in 1959, the Studio has the strongest and longest tradition of any community-run, art making co-operative in the Arctic. Due to the stability and longevity of the co-op's management, four generations of Inuit artists have developed and sold their art around the world.

Ashoona's work is unique among the artists working in Kinngait. She is best known for her highly personal and imaginative iconography, with imagery ranging from closely observed naturalistic scenes of her Arctic home to monstrous and fantastical visions. Her drawings imagine the past and present fused into a prophetic future, such as human-animal hybrid creatures, women birthing worlds and mystical or otherworldly landscapes clearly inspired by the terrain of her northern home. Far from being dystopic, Ashoona's brightly coloured drawings teem with life. Unlike many settler visions of the future that seem to dwell on clashes between humans and nature, humans and other humans, or humans and otherworldly 'invaders', Ashoona's earthly and extraterrestrial worlds exist within a kinder intergalactic future.

Today, television shows like *The Walking Dead* (2010 - present) stimulate our fears of the unknown, the monstrous and the 'Other' in a manner that risks increasing our xenophobia and provoking violence. Ashoona's drawings speak to these current anxieties, yet her artwork does not depict humans in opposition to one another or the otherworldly. By appropriating images that reflect her

fascination with horror films, comic books and television, Ashoona merges pop culture imagery with everyday narratives to redraw the map of the boundaries between reality and fantasy, past and future.

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Alicia Henry

[Witnessing](#)

Guest Curator: Daina Augaitis

For the last two decades, Alicia Henry has been exploring unconventional approaches to portraiture, using the face to represent something that is hidden, revealed and performed. Originally from Illinois, Henry has lived for the past twenty years in Nashville, TN, where she is an artist and professor of art.

Henry creates two-dimensional figures and group compositions that are commanding in their grace and expressiveness. Selecting her media carefully, she works with felt, canvas and other textiles, as well as leather and paperboard, all of which absorb her drawn and stitched gestures that register a spectrum of contexts and emotions. Notions of gender and family are significant in her works, as are physical layers that suggest multiple and unfixed identities. Tender renditions of a mother with child appear, as do groupings of twenty or more females that signify formations of like-minded “families” within communities.

In this, her first Canadian exhibition, Henry’s compelling compositions are drawn from a multitude of references: the artist’s own memories, her collection of West African masks and events on the street or on television, to name but a few. Imbued with her perspective as an African American woman, the figures assert themselves as timeless witnesses embodying the impact of personal and social histories.

In a recent conversation about her practice, Henry explained that she does not view her work as political, but nonetheless acknowledges that “at this time in the United States, the brown body has become politicized.” In her installations,

composed primarily of dark-toned figures, a lingering melancholy evokes racial traumas suffered by innumerable groups and individuals, today and over the centuries. But simultaneously – through their direct gaze and erect composure – Henry’s multigenerational survivors exude a powerful strength and confidence. They stand in anticipation of an egalitarian future – a utopian goal that underpins much of Henry’s practice.

Witnessing is Alicia Henry’s first solo exhibition in Canada.

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Winter 2019 Season Programs and Events

For a full list of programs and events:
thepowerplant.org/ProgramsEvents.aspx

Together with our Winter exhibitions, we are pleased to present numerous opportunities for visitors to engage with the works on view! Join us as **Alicia Henry speaks with guest curator Daina Augaitis** and **Omar Ba speaks with Associate Curator Nabila Abdel Nabi** about their works as part of our *In Conversation* series. Enjoy a **double-feature film screening of *Kinngait: Riding Light Into the World* and *Ghost Noise*** followed by a **panel discussion** about Shuvinai Ashoona’s *Mapping Worlds* with guest curator Dr. Nancy Campbell. Experience the unforgettable performance ***Poor People’s TV Room SOLO*** by 2018 MacArthur Fellow **Okwui Okpokwasili**, curated by The Power Plant with support of TD Ready Commitment and co-presented by Civic Theatres Toronto, as part of Progress International Festival of Performance and Ideas, presented in partnership by SummerWorks and The Theatre Centre. See five films, both documentary and fictional, by renowned director **Haile Gerima**, each exploring stories from the African continent and diaspora. Visit for a **Sunday Scene** to hear from artists, curators and non-art professionals speak about our exhibitions. Artists are also invited to participate in a **Master Class with Alicia Henry**, as well as a **Portfolio Night** to discuss their works with our curators and guest curators. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to bring children to our widely popular **Power Kids** programs, each of which begins with a brief tour in the galleries, followed by hands-on art making. Lastly, rediscover the joy of spending time with art during our annual **Slow Art Day** program.

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For more information on exhibitions and programming, please contact the Gallery: info@thepowerplant.org / 416.973.4949 / thepowerplant.org / @ThePowerPlantTO

About The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery

The Power Plant is Canada's leading public gallery devoted exclusively to contemporary visual art. It is a vital forum for the advanced artistic culture of our time that offers an exceptional facility and professional support to diverse living artists, while engaging equally diverse audiences in their work. The Power Plant pursues its activities through exhibitions, publications and public programming that incorporate other areas of culture when they intersect with visual art.

Director: Gaëtane Verna

ADMISSION: ALL YEAR, ALL FREE
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Providing as many people as possible with access to these programs and events remains the gallery's top priority. The initiative leading these efforts is a renewed partnership with BMO Financial Group, whose support of the ALL YEAR, ALL FREE initiative is vital to expanding and diversifying audiences by eliminating the cost of admission to The Power Plant's exhibition program.

For bios, images, interview requests or more information please contact:

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media@thepowerplant.org / 416.973.4949

For more information please visit:

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