



Susan Inglett Gallery is pleased to present *Saya Woolfalk: The Woods Woman Method*, in collaboration with Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects. The exhibition will take place from 31 January to 15 March 2025. An opening reception will be held from 6 – 8 PM on Thursday, 6 February 2025.

The exhibition anticipates Woolfalk's mid-career survey at The Museum of Arts & Design: *Saya Woolfalk: Empathic Universe*, curated by Alexandra Schwartz. The artist's first major museum exhibition in New York City, opening 12 April 2025, will include multimedia installations, paintings, sculptures, performance, and works on paper created during the past twenty years.

*The Woods Woman Method* is the newest manifestation of the artist's ongoing exploration of hybrid identity, accomplished through an elaborate fiction inspired by her own family background. Combining elements of African American, Japanese, and European cultures with allusions to anthropology, feminist theory, science fiction, Eastern religion, and fashion, Woolfalk depicts the story of a chimeric species she names the Empathics, botanic

humanoid beings with a highly evolved ability to understand the experiences of others.

The Woods Women, a secret society of forest dwellers, first emerged within Woolfalk's Empathic Universe, as she prepared for her solo exhibition at the Newark Museum of Art in 2021. While an Artist-in-Residence at the Museum from 2019 to 2021, she closely engaged with its renowned Herbarium and Hudson River School collections, leading to her reimagining of the earth and sky as she considered the "speculative fictions" of these idealized American landscapes, and her consideration of indigenous North American creation myths, oral histories of the descendants of enslaved Africans, and their uses of medicinal plants.

The exhibition features drawings, prints, mixed-media collages, sculpture, and video. Among the works on view are *Birthing a New Sky: Starship Moon Cycle* (2022), an inspired visualization of the artist's sister, sitting in a lotus position, anticipating the birth of her daughter. Woolfalk writes:

*For a new sky to be born she must split herself into a million pieces. Each cell in her body replicates itself, spinning in twirling orbits. Her atomized insides burst apart, cascading into the void around her. Swirling and churning, one cell makes its way back to her center, where her heart had been. This brave new life expands, forcing its way out as new light, new land – a new sky.*

Other highlights include the landscape collages, *Birthing a New Sky: Manuscripts 3 and 4* (2021), and *5 and 6* (2022), in which Woolfalk posits an alternative American creation myth. While appearing to be simple abstractions, these works are quite complex, composed of hundreds of intricately pieced and layered elements created from handmade Japanese papers that she has painted and stained with watercolor and gouache, Japanese silver foil, and acrylic medium.

The series of large-scale prints, *The Four Virtues* (2017) depict the physical embodiments of Prudence, Fortitude, Justice, and Temperance, qualities that are vital to the ethos of her world.



SAYA WOOLFALK (b. 1979) earned her B.A. in visual art and economics from Brown University in 2001 and her MFA in sculpture from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2004. Her many honors and awards include a Fulbright grant to study in Brazil (2005); a residency at the Studio Museum in Harlem (2007); and most recently, the 2023 Anonymous Was a Woman award. She has participated in exhibitions throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia including solo shows at the Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, New Hampshire; the Newark Museum of Art, New Jersey; the Nelson Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Missouri; the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati; the Mead Art Museum, Amherst, Massachusetts; The SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah; the Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln, Nebraska; the Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia; the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York; among others, and group shows at

the AKG Buffalo Art Museum; ArtScience Museum, Marina Bay Sands, Singapore; the Baltimore Museum of Art; the Brooklyn Museum; the Seattle Art Museum; the Studio Museum in Harlem; MoMA PS1; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Contemporary Art Museum, Houston; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts; and many other institutions worldwide. Her many public commissions include The Coretta Scott King Peace and Meditation Garden, which was dedicated at the King Center in Atlanta in April 2023. Monuments to Marjorie Stoneman Douglas and Ruth Bader Ginsberg (in Miami and Los Angeles respectively) are forthcoming. Works by Saya Woolfalk are in the collections of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art Museum; the Hunter Museum of American Art; AKG Buffalo Art Museum; the Baltimore Museum of Art; the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Studio Museum in Harlem; the Chrysler Museum of Art; the Mead Museum of Art; the Everson Museum of Art; the Newark Museum of Art; the Weatherspoon Art Museum; and many other institutions.

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