

Waddoups, Ryan. "Patrick Quarm Peels Back the Layers of Navigating Fraught Social Spaces." *Surface Magazine*. June 17, 2022.

SURFACE

Patrick Quarm Peels Back the Layers of Navigating Fraught Social Spaces

With an array of vivid textiles sourced in Africa, the Ghanaian-American artist weaves together a dazzling multi-layered collage that captures in-between moments both physically and poetically.



Patrick Quarm in his studio. Photography by John Dennis, courtesy NXTHVN

Here, we ask an artist to frame the essential details behind one of their latest works.

Bio: Patrick Quarm, 33, Ghana and the U.S. ([@_quarm](#))

Title of work: *Place of Abode* (2022).

Where to see it: "[Undercurrents](#)" at Sean Kelly Gallery (475 10th Ave, New York) until August 5. Organized by NXTHVN curatorial fellows Marissa Del Toro and Jamillah Hinson, the group exhibition features work from NXTHVN's 2021-22 Studio Fellows: Layo Bright, John Guzman, Alyssa Klauer, Africanus Okokon, Patrick Quarm, Daniel Ramos, and Warith Taha.

Three words to describe it: Three-dimensional, layers, collage.

SEANKELLY



“Place of Abode” (2022) by Patrick Quarm. Photography by Chris Gardner, courtesy of NXTHVN

What was on your mind at the time: This is an idea I’ve had in my artist notebook for a few years. I was thinking of creating a three-layered painting that reflects the past, present, and future as portals and in-between spaces where the hybrid exists. I knew I wanted to incorporate the African mask into the layers to reference stereotypical definitions and how they’ve evolved over time in Africa’s history. Each layer to me existed as a moment in time while constantly shedding its remnants in the other layers. This was an idea I started pondering when I began to move and evolve through the world to recreate myself, hence the hybrid theme. The ultimate question for me was: How do I allocate these events in their rightful place and time through a visual representation? To resolve this, I decided to use processes such as erasure, cutting, and collaging, and materials like oil paint and the African print fabric to arrive at a finished painting that conceptually and metaphorically connected to my thought process.

An interesting feature that’s not immediately noticeable: My use of African print fabrics has characterized my work with colorful, bright, and vivid patterns making it distinct, but I think the most interesting feature is the layering that allows a three-dimensional presentation of the work. Encountering the work at first glance might not reveal all its secrets but as you walk around it, viewers get to see how multilayered it is, and your body becomes part of the work and its narrative. Each layer has its own history and place and when they come together, they present a unified story. To experience and understand my work is to experience it in person—images do not reveal all of its nuances.

SEANKELLY



“Place of Abode” (2022) by Patrick Quarm. Photography by Chris Gardner, courtesy of NXTHVN

How it reflects your practice as a whole: My practice connects with my personal reflection and experience of the world and the social spaces I’m constantly mapping through. It usually begins from the personal where I then connect it to the universal to allow people’s own interpretations based on their experience of hybridity to enter the conversation. These ideas come to life in the paintings through my use of material and process that carve a narrative of the body as a being, able to exist within multiple cultural spaces.

My practice is mainly based in both Ghana, which I call home, and the United States. My work bridges these two worlds by using materials that conceptually and historically connect both worlds into a syncretic narrative of history and culture. I usually source my African print fabrics from Ghana, bring them to the United States, which connects to the idea of crossing borders to create these paintings, and I source my painting materials, such as oil paints and canvas fabrics, from the United States. It’s a constant negotiation of the two worlds I navigate that is reflected in my studio and art making.

One song that captures its essence: [“Sunshine Day”](#) by Osibisa, a Ghanaian-English Afro Rock band born in London in the 1960s. I love how their music bridges the two worlds and creates an exciting and happy amalgamation of multicultural music. With all the bright elements in my work, I want my audience to experience it as a Sunshine Day. Happy vibes.