

David Alekhuogie  
1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair  
May 1 – 4, 2024



We are pleased to present the work of the Nigerian American multidisciplinary artist David Alekhuogie at the 2024 New York edition of the 1-54 Contemporary African Art Fair. Alekhuogie is known for his photo-based prints and sculptures which question ideas of authorship and examine the route through which African Americans became cognizant of their cultural heritage. The gallery will show a selection of photographs informed by Alekhuogie's research into the photographic archive and informed by his 2019 trip to Nigeria, the birthplace of his father. Also on view is a selection from *Somnyama Ngonyama*, the acclaimed series of self-portraits by South African visual activist Zanele Muholi.

Among the highlights will be works from Alekhuogie's *A Reprise* series. Recontextualizing iconic images of African sculptures by early 20th century photographers Walker Evans and Man Ray, Alekhuogie explores the relationship between Cubism, Modernism and African sculptures. He proposes a rethinking of Evans's modernist photographs documenting African sculptures included in the 1935 Museum of Modern Art exhibition *African Negro Art*, a forerunner in presenting African objects as artworks rather than anthropological artifacts. Alekhuogie has continued the series, dialoguing with Man Ray's historic 1926 photograph *Noire et Blanche*. Through his own transmutation of these images, Alekhuogie brings what he calls "the hand-me-down nature of Pan Africanism" to the foreground, and questions through whose eyes, and whose agency, many African Americans form their cultural narrative.

In the series *To Live and Die in LA*, Alekhuogie explores the body as landscape by placing cropped images of male torsos at Los Angeles locations charged with personal and political significance. The images are drawn from Alekhuogie's 2017 photographic series *Pull Up*, which used the fashion trope of sagging and the horizon line of the waist to examine coded representations of black masculinity. Using geographic coordinates as titles to specify place, Alekhuogie notes: "Politics of identity are bound up in landscape." The tightly framed figures are camouflaged by light, shadow and sharp-edged vegetation creating an ambiguous tension between vulnerability and aggression. Printed on canvas and pinned in shallow plywood boxes, the photographs are ultimately portraits of Alekhuogie's hometown of Los Angeles with its tangled history of dreams and violence.

### About David Alekhuogie

David Alekhuogie (born 1986) received his MFA from Yale University and BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Most recently, in 2024, he exhibited at The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles; The Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, DC; and the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, with solo exhibitions at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, 2019; and the Chicago Artist Coalition, 2016. Previously, Alekhuogie has participated in group exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2020; the California African American Art Museum, Los Angeles, 2020; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, 2017. He is a recipient of a 2024 Harvard Radcliffe Institute Fellowship and was awarded a Rema Hort Mann Foundation Emerging Artist Grant in 2019. David Alekhuogie lives and works in Los Angeles.