

Inman Gallery at Untitled, Miami
Booth A4, December 2–6, 2026

DAVID McGEE

For Untitled Art, Miami Beach, Inman Gallery is excited to debut new works from **David McGee**'s latest series, ***The Shadow Men.***

Exploring Black male archetypes, ***The Shadow Men*** take inspiration from Ralph Ellison's 1952 novel, *The Invisible Man*. McGee notes that these men are like walking shadows: they exist on the margins, at times invisible or unseen. As the series has progressed, McGee transforms this notion of invisibility, creating portraits that celebrate these men as trailblazers and bringing their presence to light. Formatted as large-scale watercolors, each portrait synthesizes references from art history, Shakespearean theatre, and popular culture. McGee establishes a rich symbolic lexicon of motifs including birds, fruits, and musical instruments, which he uses as narrative devices to further characterize his protagonists. Including both historic and imagined characters, the *Shadow Men* honor each man's personal sacrifices and achievements, as well as enriching our knowledge of Black cultural history.







DAVID McGEE

THE SHADOW MEN

David McGee
Cato of Utica, 2026
The Shadow Men
watercolor on Arches 300lb cold press watercolor paper
60 1/4 x 40 1/2 in (153 x 102.9 cm)
65 1/2 x 45 5/8 x 2 1/8 in (166.4 x 115.9 x 5.4 cm) framed
DMC 344



Cato of Utica is named after the influential Roman soldier and politician who was a staunch dissenter of Julius Ceasar. Cato eventually chose to take his own life rather than living under Ceasar's rule, demonstrating his loyalty to the Roman Republic in a final act of rebellion and ultimate liberation.

McGee captures Cato's fighting spirit by depicting a modern boxer, imagining both figures as Freedom Fighters (McGee was also reminded of Fred Hampton, who was martyred in 1969). McGee was particularly interested in boxers from the 1930s and 1940s (prior to Muhammad Ali's influence on the sport), as that era cultivated more inwardly silent fighters, furthering the interiority of the Shadow Men series.





David McGee
Fly Trap, 2026
The Shadow Men
watercolor on Arches 300lb cold press watercolor paper
60 3/8 x 40 1/4 in (153.4 x 102.2 cm)
65 1/2 x 45 1/2 x 2 1/8 in (166.4 x 115.6 x 5.4 cm) framed
DMC 342



Fly Trap depicts an imagined figure inspired by Ridley Scott's movie, *American Gangster* (2007), a biographic film loosely based on the life of Frank Lucas, a drug dealer active in Harlem in the 1970s.

In the movie, Lucas (played by Denzel Washington) is finally caught by Federal Law Enforcement when he attends the Ali-Frazier fight dressed in a flamboyant, eye-catching outfit. According to McGee, the character never dressed loudly but does so just once on the request of his wife, who remarks he looks "really fly." However, in standing out, he is caught by the police. Hence: Fly Trap.

The work references the idea that sometimes being subdued is a requisite for success, while also capturing the significance of fashion, especially for Black men in the 1970s.





David McGee
Irony of the Negro Policeman (After J.M.B), 2025
The Shadow Men
watercolor, glitter on Arches 300lb cold press watercolor paper
61 1/2 x 40 1/4 in (156.2 x 102.2 cm)
66 5/8 x 45 3/4 x 2 1/8 in (169.2 x 116.2 x 5.4 cm) framed
DMC 310



Irony of the Negro Policeman (After J.M.B) is McGee's response to the Jean-Michel Basquiat painting by the same name from 1981. While Basquiat's painting was more critical in tone – highlighting the hypocrisy of Black policeman working within a career that historically and disproportionally harms Black communities and communities of color – McGee complicates the subject by depicting Samuel J. Battle, the first African American police officer who served in the New York Police Department from 1911–1941.

While retaining some of the same contradictions of Basquiat's work, McGee's rendition is more sympathetic to the individual, holding nuance for the difficulties Battle must have faced by entering this line of work.







David McGee
Irony of the Negro Policeman (After J.M.B) [detail]

Jean-Michel Basquiat
Irony of Negro Policeman, 1981
122 cm × 183 cm (48 in × 72 in)
acrylic and oil stick on wood
Private collection; image courtesy of Art Everywhere



David McGee
The Vogue King, 2026
The Shadow Men
watercolor on Arches 300lb cold press watercolor paper
60 1/4 x 40 1/4 in (153 x 102.2 cm)
65 1/2 x 45 1/2 x 2 1/8 in (166.4 x 115.6 x 5.4 cm) framed
DMC 343



The Vogue King is a portrait of late fashion journalist André Leon Talley. Talley was an editor at Vogue Magazine, serving as the publication's first Black male creative director from 1988–1995, and first black male editor-at-large, from 1998–2013.

As a pioneer in his field, Talley was subject to scrutiny and criticism. While making this work, McGee read Hilton Als' writing on Talley, published in the New Yorker in 1994, which McGee noted was a cruel and judgmental characterization of his conflicted public persona.

In McGee's eyes, Talley was easily misread; flashy but dignified, and a prime example of embodying Double Consciousness (coined by W.E.B. Du Bois *in The Souls of Black Folk*, published 1903). Here, McGee honors Talley by depicting him like an African prince, offering him counsel from the ancestral spirits to guide his path.







David McGee
The Vogue King [detail]

André Leon Talley, Image by George Etheredge, The New York Times
Source: Jessica Testa, "André Leon Talley in His Own Words,"
The New York Times, January 23, 2022.



DAVID McGEE

THE TAROT CARDS

Alongside *The Shadow Men* is a curated selection of McGee's *The Tarot Cards* series, from which *The Shadow Men* derive.

The *Tarot Cards* comprise approximately 160 small works on paper and are rooted in a rich visual juxtaposition of image and text, reminiscent of the playing cards that give the series its name. The images pull from the art historical canon with varying degrees of popular recognition, from Vincent van Gogh's "Sunflowers" to Cy Twombly's "Thermopylae, Gaeta." McGee cleverly blurs the distinction between 'reading' and 'viewing' through his pairings, using language evocative of US American history with a focus on the Civil War. Collectively, the Tarot Cards tell a foggy but expansive story of the Civil War, highlighting its colonial inceptions prior to 1861, lasting historical and cultural legacies, and ongoing racial and economic reckonings still felt today.

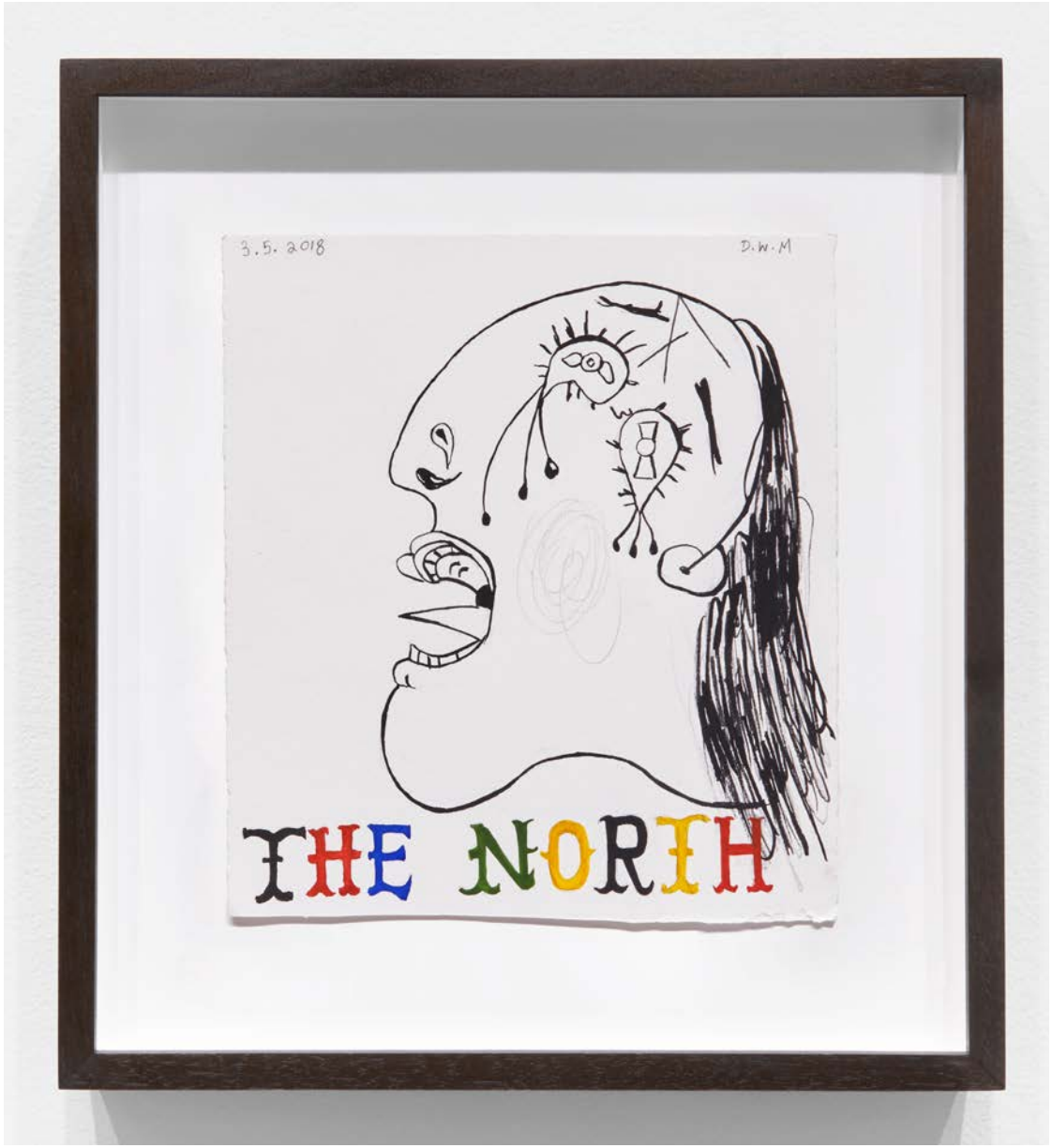


Installation view, *David McGee: The Griot and the Nightingale*, Bechtler Museum of Modern Art





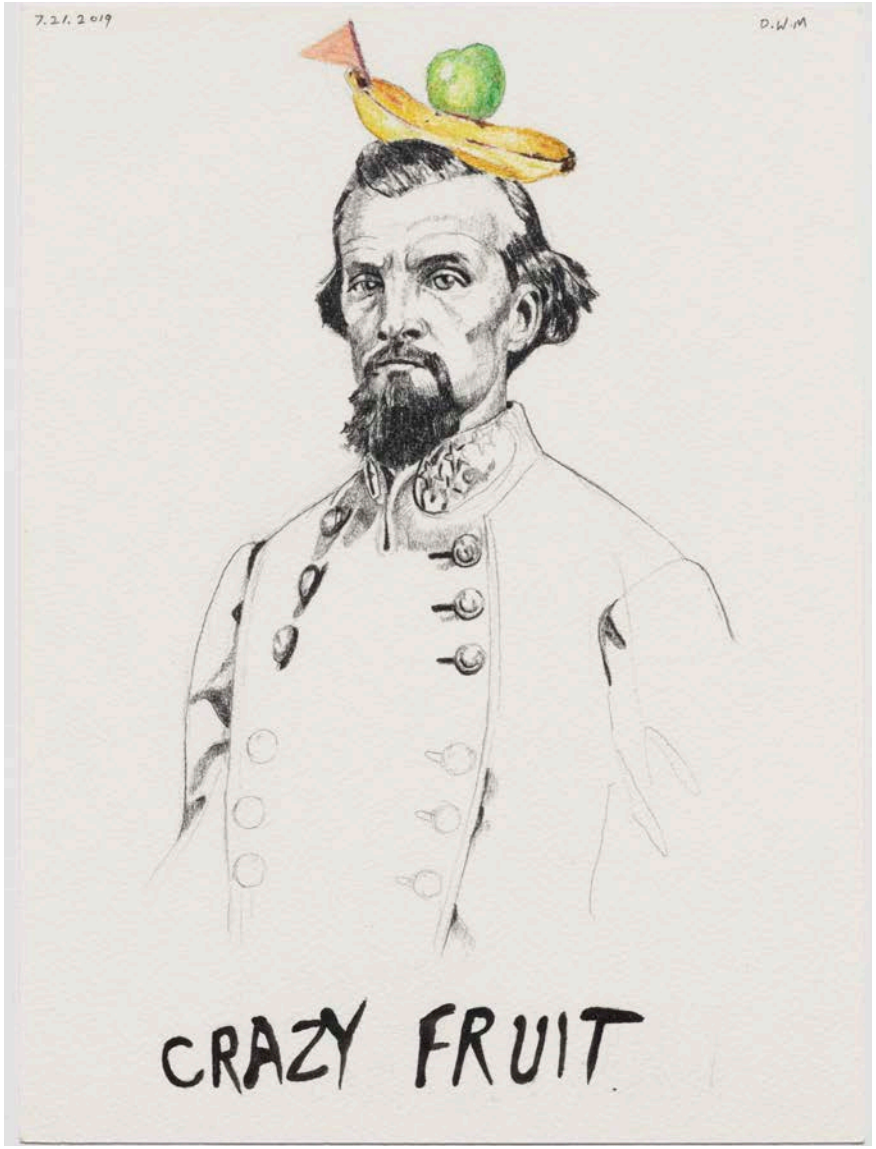
the south, 2018
colored pencil, ink and watercolor on paper
14 1/2 x 13 1/4 x 1 5/8 in (36.8 x 33.7 x 4.1 cm) framed



THE NORTH, 2018
ink, graphite and watercolor on paper
14 1/2 x 13 1/4 x 1 5/8 in (36.8 x 33.7 x 4.1 cm) framed



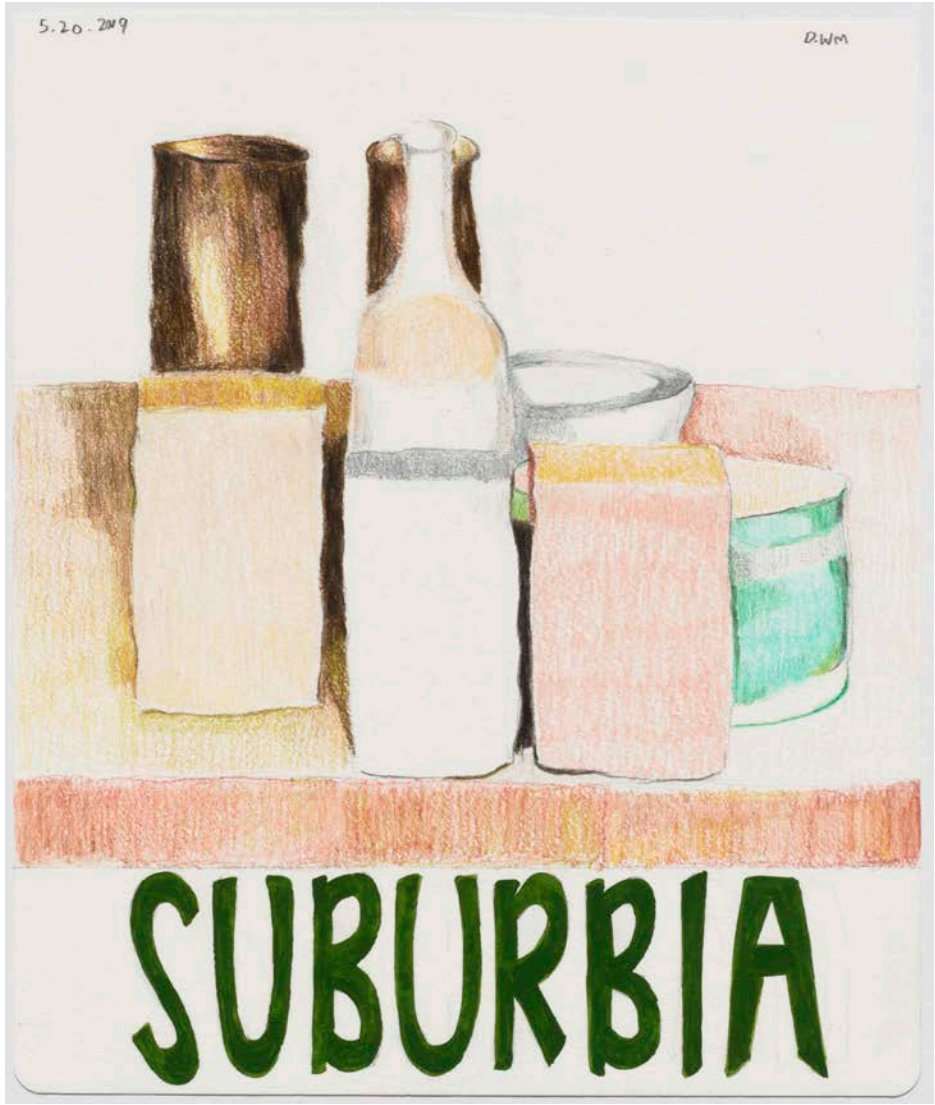
1861, 2018
watercolor on paper
9 7/8 x 8 3/4 in (25.1 x 22.2 cm)



CRAZY FRUIT, 2019
colored pencil, ink and watercolor on paper
12 1/4 x 9 in (31.1 x 22.9 cm)



mAdAm X, 2018
colored pencil and watercolor on paper
10 x 8 3/8 in (25.4 x 21.3 cm)



SUBURBIA, 2018
colored pencil and watercolor on paper
10 x 8 1/2 in (25.4 x 21.6 cm)

Encompassing painting, printmaking, watercolor, and drawing, **David McGee** (born 1962, Lockhart, LA; based Houston, TX) creates work that explores the interplay between image and text to poignantly situate his practice within larger art historical narratives and generative social critiques. Oscillating between abstraction and figuration, his work explores a variety of subjects expanding towards the emotional weights of race, language, signs and signifiers, art history, and the recognition of existence, both individual and collective.

McGee grew up in Detroit, MI, and moved to Texas in the 1980s, where he studied at Prairie View A&M University through 1985. He has had solo exhibitions at numerous institutions, including The Menil Collection (Houston, TX), Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (Houston, TX), Museum of African American Culture (Houston, TX), The Art Museum of Southeast Texas (Beaumont, TX), The Gallery at UT Arlington, Texas, The Galveston Art Center (Galveston, TX), and others. His work is featured in numerous permanent collections, including the Grand Rapids Art Museum (Grand Rapids, MI); Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy (Andover, MA); Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Boston, MA); Rhode Island School of Design Museum (Providence, RI); W. E. B. Du Bois Institute for Afro-American Research at Harvard University (Cambridge, MA); The Menil Collection (Houston, TX); The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (Houston, TX); Bechtler Museum of Modern Art (Charlotte, NC); and Dallas Museum of Art (Dallas, TX).

His debut museum survey, ***David McGee: The Griot and the Nightingale*** was on view from March 10 – August 23, 2026 at the Bechtler Museum of Modern Art (Charlotte, NC). Organized by Katia Zavistovski, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art for the institution, the exhibition was accompanied by a comprehensive catalogue.



Installation view, *David McGee: The Griot and the Nightingale*, Bechtler Museum of Modern Art



To inquire about availability of these works, please contact Kerry Inman at kerry@inmangallery.com or text her at 713-412-5730.

For a listing of included works in the booth with pricing
Click here for a viewing room

For a listing of all Tarot Cards with pricing
Click here for a viewing room