



**ROOTS AND REFLECTIONS:**  
*A Journey through  
Time and Nature*

5th of May till the 5th of July

**Collective exhibition:** Robert Santore, Jason Middlebrook, Sylvestre Guavrit and Halim flowers.

**Curated by Mara Firetti**

T: +971 55 228 6475  
E: [info@firetticontemporary.com](mailto:info@firetticontemporary.com)  
W: [www.firetticontemporary.com](http://www.firetticontemporary.com)

Al Quoz 1, Street 8  
Alserkal Avenue, Unit 29  
Dubai, UAE

*Roots and Reflections: A Journey through Time and Nature* is an immersive exhibition that takes viewers on a captivating journey through the works of four contemporary artists from diverse backgrounds. These artists employ various mediums to create works that capture their personal histories, life experiences, cultural roots, and reflections on nature.

The exhibition is thoughtfully curated around three central themes that are fundamental to the human experience: memory and identity, nature and environment, and innovation and experimentation. Through these themes, the artists explore essential questions about the human condition and the relationship between the self and the world around us.

The mixed media works of **Robert Santore** convey the theme of memory and identity, exploring his personal history and cultural roots. Born in California to a fifth-generation Texan family, Santore spent his formative years moving between the U.K. and California, and he began creating art at a young age as a way to process his experiences. His layered pieces express the complexity of his memories and the events that shaped him, drawing inspiration from his extensive travels through Europe and the South Pacific.

Memory and identity are also prominent themes in the works of African-American artist **Halim Flowers**, who draws on his personal experiences and struggles with the criminal justice system to explore themes of race, identity, and the human condition. His works challenge viewers to confront their assumptions and biases about identity and societal norms, highlighting the importance of diversity in art and the power of visual storytelling to inspire critical reflection and promote social change.

The theme of nature and environment is explored through the marble sculptures of **Sylvestre Gauvrit** and the wooden wall sculptures of **Jason Middlebrook**. Gauvrit's organic sculptures prompt us to reflect on our relationship with the natural world, while Middlebrook's carved tree trunks serve as canvases for geometric compositions that reference the works of artists such as

Ellsworth Kelly, Bridget Riley, and Frank Stella. These works invite us to consider the relationship between art and nature and to contemplate the ways in which the natural world shapes our lives and art.

The exhibition also highlights innovation and experimentation, as demonstrated through the mixed media pieces of Robert Santore and the marble sculptures of Sylvestre Gauvrit. These works push the boundaries of what is possible with different mediums, challenging viewers' perceptions of art and inviting us to see the world in new and unexpected ways.

Taken together, *Roots and Reflections: A Journey through Time and Nature* showcases the richness and diversity of contemporary art and invites us to reflect on the universal themes that artists explore through their work. Through the eyes of these artists, we are reminded of the importance of our roots and the ways in which our reflections on the natural world can inspire creativity and innovation. This exhibition encourages us to contemplate the complex relationship between memory, identity, and the natural world and to consider the role of art in shaping our understanding of the world. Join us on this journey through time and nature and discover the power of art to connect us with the world around us.

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

### Robert Santore



Robert Santore is a contemporary artist who creates paintings and sculptures, and has gained recognition globally. He has a studio in Manhattan, New York, as well as in Montgomery Texas. Robert spent his childhood in the United Kingdom and Southern California beach towns, and later attended the Parsons School of Design in New York and the Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles. Although he was accepted into the prestigious UCLA Film School, he opted to focus on contemporary art.

After creating large-scale works of art in his downtown Los Angeles loft, Robert's first solo exhibition took place at the Jerry Solomon Gallery in Los Angeles in 1986, which was a sold-out show. He has also had solo exhibitions sponsored by various prestigious institutions such as the

T: +971 55 228 6475  
E: [info@firetticontemporary.com](mailto:info@firetticontemporary.com)  
W: [www.firetticontemporary.com](http://www.firetticontemporary.com)

Al Quoz 1, Street 8  
Alserkal Avenue, Unit 29  
Dubai, UAE

City of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Municipal Art Collection, and the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art. Moreover, Robert has participated in many group exhibitions both in the United States and internationally, and his works are present in many permanent collections of prestigious art museums and private collections.

Robert is an avid surfer and skier, and he still enjoys traveling to Europe and the South Pacific to pursue his passion for sports, new experiences, and exposure to classical and contemporary art, sculpture, and architecture. Robert has met and admired many celebrated artists throughout his career, such as Andy Warhol, Keith Haring, and Jean Michel Basquiat, as well as other renowned artists like Jim Dine, Ed Ruscha, and Eric Fischl.

Currently, Robert works with various mediums, such as oils, watercolors, gouache, egg tempera, steel, and wood, and his recent work is inspired by his travels to Europe and the South Pacific. His art reflects his unique vision of life and beauty, which is shaped by his rich experiences and memories.

Jason Middlebrook



Jason Middlebrook was born in Jackson, Michigan in 1966. He earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of California at Santa Cruz, and a Master of Fine Arts from the San Francisco Art Institute. He also completed an Independent Study Program at The Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

Middlebrook's art combines natural forms and found objects with references to abstractionists of the 20th century. His signature works involve carving and shaping tree trunks into canvases for geometric compositions that reference works by artists such as Ellsworth Kelly, Bridget Riley, and Frank Stella. He has also created assemblages from concrete-cast bottles and mobiles made of wooden scraps that pay homage to Alexander Calder.

In his earlier works created in New York, he focused on repurposing materials, while his more recent works created in Hudson, New York, incorporate wood from his surroundings. He creates abstract forms, graphic patterns, and geometric shapes on cut and carved tree trunks. In recent years, he has also created pictorial and illustrative works that combine his wood art motifs with personal experiences.

T: +971 55 228 6475  
E: [info@firetticontemporary.com](mailto:info@firetticontemporary.com)  
W: [www.firetticontemporary.com](http://www.firetticontemporary.com)

Al Quoz 1, Street 8  
Alserkal Avenue, Unit 29  
Dubai, UAE

Recent solo exhibitions include Galleria Giampaolo Abbondio, Todi, Italy; Miles McEnery Gallery, New York, NY; David Smith Gallery, Denver, CO; Moss Arts Center, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA; Gallery 16, San Francisco, CA; LaMontagne Gallery, Boston, MA; Jeff Bailey Gallery, Hudson, NY; Lora Reynolds Gallery, Austin, TX; Galleria Pack, Milan, Italy; David B. Smith Gallery, Denver, CO; Lora Reynolds Gallery, Austin, TX; Gallery 16, San Francisco, CA; and the Thomas Cole National Historic Site, Catskill, NY.

Middlebrook's work has been included in group exhibitions at the Children's Museum of the Arts, New York, NY; Dorsky Museum of Art, New Paltz, NY; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, CO; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, CA; Parco Archeologico di Siponto, Siponto, Italy; Peters Projects, Santa Fe, NM; Pizzuti Collection, Columbus, OH; and the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE, among others.

His work may be found in the collections of the Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; Marte Museum, San Salvador, El Salvador; Redmond, WA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; The Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; NASA Art Program, Washington, D.C.; New Museum, New York, NY; Pizzuti Collection, Columbus, OH; US Embassy, Podgorica, Montenegro; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, and elsewhere.

Middlebrook lives and works in Hudson, NY.

Sylvestre Guavrit



Born in a forest of millennium oaks just before the eighties, Sylvestre has past most of his childhood climbing trees and observing nature.. and later on surfing waves around the globe. Sylvestre was a sculptor before being born, always with things and tools in his hands and his imagination would do the rest, extremely sensitive, perceptive and a bit shy.

He graduated at the Accademia Belle Arti of Carrara and worked then in various institutional art studios in Pietrasanta where he mastered his techniques of carving marble, especially monumental pieces and eventually created his own studio to make his own pieces. His sculptures are now part of public and private collections in the major cultural capital around the globe such as Paris, London, Rome, Amsterdam, Hong-Kong, Dubai...

T: +971 55 228 6475  
E: [info@firetticontemporary.com](mailto:info@firetticontemporary.com)  
W: [www.firetticontemporary.com](http://www.firetticontemporary.com)

Al Quoz 1, Street 8  
Alserkal Avenue, Unit 29  
Dubai, UAE



## Halim flowers



Halim A. Flowers is a Washington, DC-based artist, author, and human rights advocate who has dedicated his life to promoting love and justice for all. Born in 1980, Flowers is a self-taught visual artist and spoken word performer who has gained worldwide recognition for his stunning paintings and poetry.

Flowers' journey has been marked by immense hardship and resilience. In 1997, as a minor, he was arrested and wrongfully sentenced to two life sentences in Washington, DC. He spent over 20 years in prison before the Incarceration Reduction

Amendment Act of 2016 effectuated his release in 2019. During his time in prison, Flowers became an avid reader and writer, penning 11 published non-fiction works and honing his artistic skills.

Upon his release, Flowers wasted no time in pursuing his passion for the arts. He was awarded the prestigious Halcyon Arts Lab and Echoing Green fellowship awards, which provided him with the resources and support he needed to create and exhibit his art. He has since exhibited his work in numerous galleries and museums, including The Museum of Modern Art's "Marking Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration" exhibit.

In addition to his visual art, Flowers is a gifted spoken word performer and has shared his poetry at venues across the country. He is also a successful businessman, having launched several

T: +971 55 228 6475  
E: [info@firetticontemporary.com](mailto:info@firetticontemporary.com)  
W: [www.firetticontemporary.com](http://www.firetticontemporary.com)

Al Quoz 1, Street 8  
Alserkal Avenue, Unit 29  
Dubai, UAE

ventures while still in prison. He is married to L. Patrice McKinney and is raising a family in Washington, DC.

Flowers is an ardent advocate for human rights and is a member of the Board of Directors of The Frederick Douglass Project for Justice and Cultural DC. He is best known for his quote, "Love is the Antibody," which encapsulates his belief in the power of love to heal and transform society. Flowers' TEDx Talk, "Criminal Justice Reform," has further amplified his message and brought attention to the urgent need for reform in the US criminal justice system.

Flowers' work has not gone unnoticed. He has received numerous awards and honors, including a fellowship from Georgetown University's Prison and Justice Initiative and a grant from the Art for Justice Fund. He was also featured as a "Justice Ambassador" in the film "Halim's Hope" (2020), which highlights his journey and his commitment to promoting love and justice for all.