



"Visual Quotations"

Catalog published on the occasion of the solo exhibit,

Visual Quotations, *new paintings by* Titus Kaphar.

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Much of black history recorded in Western art is summarized visually by three roles: enslaved, in servitude, or impoverished. But beyond this limited social order lies a people of dignity and strength, whose survival is nothing less than miraculous. "Visual Quotations" investigates that survival.

"Visual Quotations" is a painted adaptation of the portrayal of black people in nineteenth-century Western painting. Though picaninies and minstrels dominated much of popular imagery in this era, these kinds of overtly brash characterizations were deliberately excluded from this survey in order to observe the more subtle effects of race in painting. A fundamental theme explored in this survey is the implication of hierarchy through compositional positioning (that is, the implication of one's social stature through his or her placement relative to other figures in the composition.)

Within the context of 19th Century paintings most black characters play, at best, secondary roles in the composition. The prototypical image of a black person was as a slave or servant, just outside of illuminated areas of importance. Artists used the dichotomies of the physical world: dark vs. light and up vs. down, to visually reinforce institutionalized views of race and hierarchy.

Throughout the nineteenth-century the representation of hierarchical roles changed very little in painting, but a new context referred to as "the Orient" placed black women in "erotic" and "mysterious" environments. During the late 1800s, the West developed a peculiar preoccupation with the "Orient," and whether consciously or unconsciously, the so-called "Orientalist" painters began to visually address a mythology of black sexuality. This change in the representation of black women creates a sub-text for many of the paintings in this series.

This series is ongoing and at present includes 20 paintings. The original paintings were selected for their relevance within the "canon" of Western art history, and the compositional theme of black and white people portrayed in close proximity. Each piece in this series is painted in oil on dry-erase whiteboards. White figures and all remnants of the original environment are removed from the composition. What remains is the black figure on a white ground in compositional isolation. Through the process of painting, this survey attempts to deconstruct these environmental contexts in order to allow the viewer the visual space to consider the individual represented.



Visual Quotation, Kuhn
2003, 45.5" x 56.25"



Visual Quotation, 1 Copley
2003, 43" x 45.5"



Visual Quotation, 2 Copley
2003, 49" x 85.25"



Visual Quotation, Delacroix
2003, 46.125" x 37"



Visual Quotation, 1 Mount
2003, 25.6" x 22.125"



Visual Quotation, Deas
2003, 49.25" x 32.5"



Visual Quotation, 2 Mount
2003, 37" x 30.875"



Visual Quotation, Leutze
2003, 49.375" x 35.312"



Visual Quotation, Duncanson
2003, 28.25" x 40.5"



Visual Quotation, Edmonds
2003, 13.187" x 14"



Visual Quotation, Spencer
2003, 25.25" x 22"



Visual Quotation, Johnson
2003, 17.375" x 14.5"



Visual Quotation, Blake
2003, 36.5" x 50"



Visual Quotation, Manet
2003, panel #1, 36.375" x 50"



Visual Quotation, Eakins
2003, 11.25" x 14"



Visual Quotation, Hill
2003, 32" x 20.75"





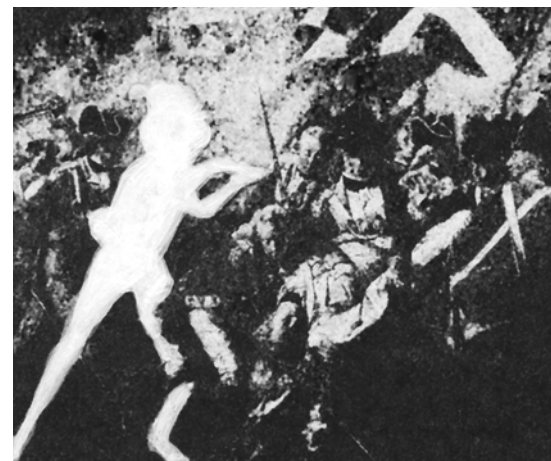
Visual Quotation, Anshutz
2003, 13.187" x 14"



Visual Quotation, Brown
2003, 32.125" x 27.875"



Visual Quotation, Gerome
2003, 24.5" x 30.25"



left to right (details):

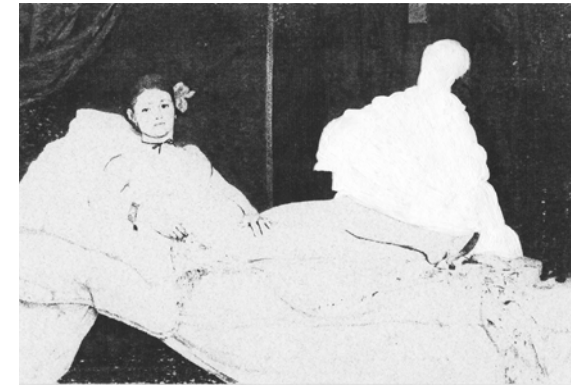
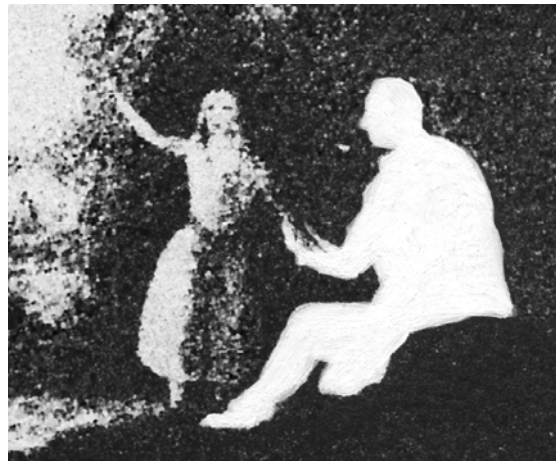
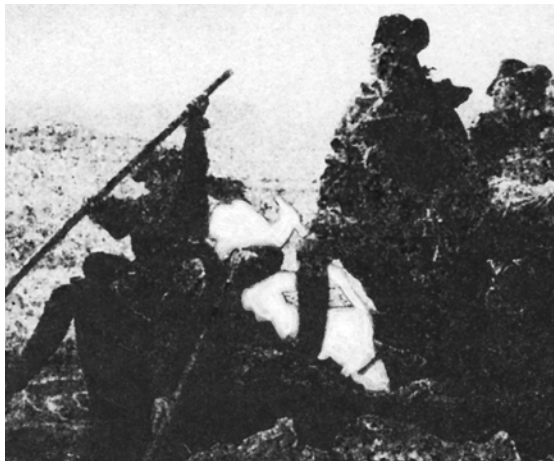
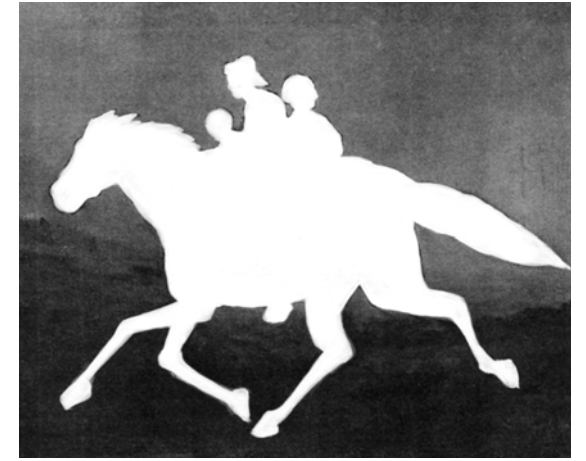
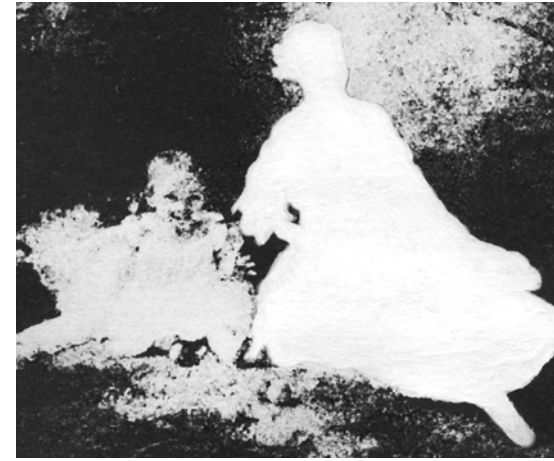
Henry Darnall III as a Child, Justus Kuhn, 1710

Watson and the Shark, John Copley, 1778

Death of Major Peirson, John Copley, 1783

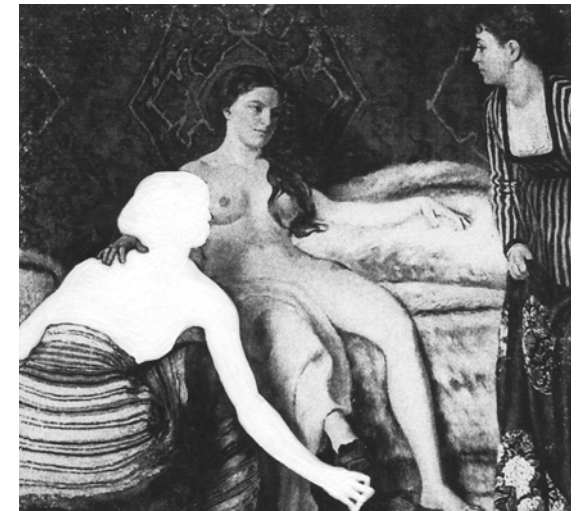
Women of Algiers, Eugene Delacroix, 1834

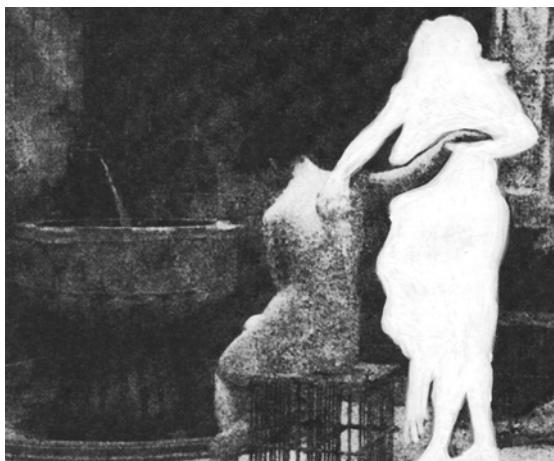
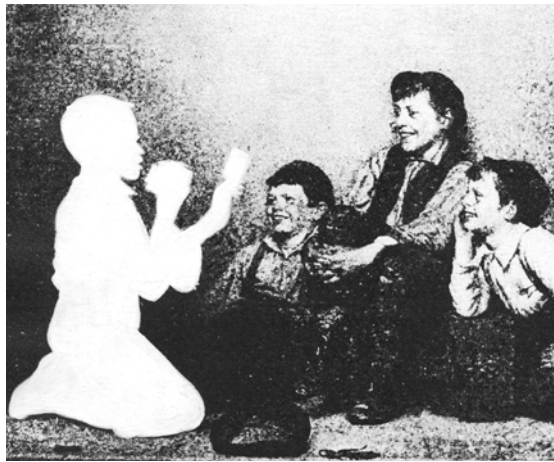
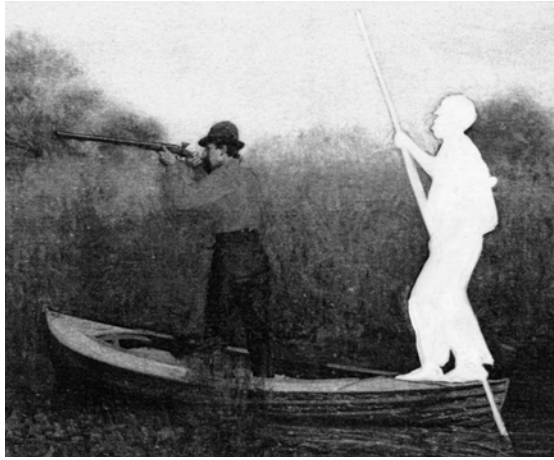
Farmers Nooning, William Mount, 1836



left to right (details):
The Turkey Shoot, Charles Deas, 1836
Eel Spearing at Setauket, William Mount, 1845
George Washington Crossing the Delaware,
 Emmanuel Leutze, 1851
Uncle Tom and Little Eva,
 Robert Scott Duncanson, 1853
All Talk, No Work,
 Francis William Edmonds, 1856

left to right (details):
Dixieland, Lilly Martin Spencer, 1862
The Ride for Liberty- The Fugitive Slaves,
 Eastman Johnson, 1862
A Negro Hung Alive by the Ribs to the Gallows,
 William Blake, 1863
Olympia, Edouard Manet, 1863
La Toilette, Frederic Bazille, 1870





left to right (details):

Will Schuster and Black Man Going Shooting (Rail Shooting), Thomas Eakins, 1876

Palo Alto Springs, Thomas Hill, 1878

The Way They Live, Thomas Anshutz, 1879

The Card Trick, John George Brown, 1880

The Bath, Jean-Léon Gérôme, 1880

Selected Historical Timeline...

1710- Justus Kuhn paints ***Henry Darnall III as a Child***

1778- John Copley paints ***Watson and the Shark***

1783- John Copley paints ***Death of Major Peirson***

1800- Jefferson elected president

1803- Louisiana Purchase

1804- Lewis and Clark expedition

1820- Missouri Compromise

1823- Monroe Doctrine

1825- Erie Canal completed

1828- Andrew Jackson elected president

1831- Nat Turner's slave revolt

1834- Eugene Delacroix paints ***Women of Algiers***

1836- Battle of the Alamo

- William Mount paints ***Farmers Nooning***

- Charles Deas paints ***The Turkey Shoot***

1838- Native Americans forced west to reservations

1840- Harriet Tubman begins work on Underground Railroad

1845- William Mount paints ***Eel Spearing at Setauket***

1849- Gold Rush

1850- Compromise of 1850

- Fugitive Slave Law enacted

1851- Emmanuel Leutze paints ***George Washington Crossing the Delaware***

1853- Robert Scott Duncanson paints ***Uncle Tom and Little Eva***

1856- Gregor Mendel starts research on genetics

- Francis William Edmonds paints ***All Talk, No Work***

1857- Dred Scott Decision

1859- Darwin publishes ***On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life***.

1860- Lincoln elected president

- 4 million people are slaves in U.S.

1861- Civil War begins

- 200,000 blacks serve in Union forces

1862- Lilly Martin Spencer paints ***Dixieland***

- Eastman Johnson paints ***The Ride for Liberty- The Fugitive Slaves***

1863- Battle of Gettysburg

- Emancipation Proclamation

- Irish American attacks on blacks in New York City, 74 dead

- William Blake paints ***A Negro Hung Alive by the Ribs to the Gallows***

- Edouard Manet paints ***Olympia***

1865- 13th Amendment (abolished slavery)

- Lincoln assassinated

1866- White civilians and police kill 46 blacks, burning 90 houses, 12 schools and four churches in Memphis

- Ku Klux Klan formed

1867- Reconstruction Act passed

1868- 14th Amendment (citizenship granted to all persons born in U.S.)

- Opelousas Massacre in Louisiana, 200-300 blacks killed

1869- First Transcontinental Railroad completed

1870- 15th Amendment (voting rights regardless of race)

- Frederic Bazille paints ***La Toilette***

1875- Civil Rights Act prohibiting discrimination of blacks in public places

- 20 blacks killed in Clinton, Mississippi

1876- Thomas Eakins paints ***Will Schuster and Black Man Going Shooting (Rail Shooting)***

1878- Thomas Hill paints ***Palo Alto Springs***

1879- Edison invents electric light

- Thomas Anshutz paints ***The Way They Live***

1880- John George Brown paints ***The Card Trick***

- Jean-Léon Gérôme paints ***The Bath***

1896- Plessy vs. Ferguson (separate but equal)

- George Washington Carver appointed director of agricultural research at Tuskegee Institute

- 78 black Americans are known to have been lynched

1898- Spanish-American War

- American army invades Puerto Rico

- White rioting in Wilmington, North Carolina; eight blacks killed

- American helps Cuba become "independent" from Spain

- 101 blacks known to have been lynched

1899- June 4- National Day of Fasting declared by Afro-American Council to protest lynchings and massacres

1901- Roosevelt becomes president



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