

June 11, 2021–September 21, 2022

*Every Earthly Morning the Sky's Light touches
Ur Life is Unprecedented in its Beauty*

Precious Okoyomon



Aspen Art Museum

*speaking in tongues first that what caused the fire in our bloodstreams
recirculating heart
refined into ritual
In the eye of the morning dreams for keeping and sharing
There is a sacredness to everyday life
Amniotic memory
Give me the soft scent of isolated grief
Spirit and survival
A bruise
 Out of the thickness of the frost the veil was now thin
Nothing would be named
the changing rate of the shift of air
Fire began against the brimstone
 Ash rain snow
Fragile world
Our unbearable wrongness of being
Sun blinding my eyes
 Rewind
unparalleled catastrophe
Continuously renewed*

For the second iteration of PRECIOUS OKOYOMON'S unique eighteen-month commission at the Aspen Art Museum, the artist has transformed the museum's rooftop exhibition space to reflect the harshness of the barren winter. The project, organized by curator at large Claude Adjil, expands Okoyomon's ongoing exploration of ecological materials and frameworks in their work and furthers their investigation into how the miracles and terrors of our natural world have been indexed into strict policies and racialized categories.

Completely reimaged for each passing season, Okoyomon's project makes use of a long timeline to highlight transformation and change. In the summer of 2021, Okoyomon collaborated with local growers to create a garden that celebrated the abundance and mutability of plant life, combining invasive species alongside those indigenous to the region and presented a monumental concrete sculpture of a black angel resolute in prayer presiding over the garden with the mountains behind her.

For winter, Okoyomon has planted evergreens among the now dormant plants that flourished in these same beds just months ago and installed a working oven in the place of the now-absent angel. Titled *Shining like a black sun at the end of the world* and made out of hemp, packed mud, and concrete, the oven, with a form modeled after traditional West African storehouses, will burn for 8 hours a day on Tuesdays and Sundays every week. It will also be at the center of dinners hosted by the museum for the community. Okoyomon continues a collaboration with the jazz musician Gio Escobar of the ensemble Standing On the Corner, who worked with the artist to record chaotic randomized symphony for the garden in the summer. *Ice Words Ghost Appearance for Strings, Woodwind, Brass and Drum* formally explores the cold desolation in sound. Finally, one new figure titled *I saw nothing in the darkness but myself*, acts as Egunguns, or watchmen of the night, mythological masked spirits in Yoruba culture that collectively protect against the incursions of evil.

LIST OF WORKS

Shining like a black sun at the end of the world
Oven, cement, concrete, hemp, resin

I saw nothing in the darkness but myself

Ice Words Ghost Appearance for Strings, Woodwind, Brass and Drum
Audio

Standing On The Corner Art Ensemble featuring ...

Shamel Cee Mystery - Guitar , Concert Drum

Linton Smith II - Trumpet, Drum

Clerida Eltimé - Cello, Drum

Syl Dubenion - Saxophone



PRECIOUS OKOYOMON (b. 1993) is a poet and artist living in New York City. They have had institutional solo exhibitions at the LUMA Westbau in Zurich (2018), the MMK in Frankfurt (2020), Performance Space New York (2021), as well as major performances commissioned by the Serpentine Galleries, London (2019) and the Institute of Contemporary Art, London (2019). Their second book *But Did U Die?* is forthcoming from Serpentine and Wonder Press in 2022. They are the recipient of the 2021 Frieze Artist Award.

STANDING ON THE CORNER is an Earth-based art ensemble founded in 2016 by Shamel Cee Mystery, aka Gio Escobar, that functions best in Brooklyn, New York. Inspired by, made for, and consisting of the resilience and upheaval of all people of the African diaspora, Standing On The Corner thrives in fugitivity. They can appear on any particular night as the beat of one drum, as an orchestra of 30, or as a ghost entirely, but are always on the run. The ensemble produces musical, visual, and experiential works that equate hyperlocal incidence to cosmological wisdom. Visiting sites of emotional resonance under the weight of subjective histories and traumas, the art ensemble seeks to uncover the mysteries and the ghosts of hidden truths through focused interpretation.

THE TRIAL OF THE CENTURY

Anne Boyer

The whole world
that lifetime
was sparrows

and the red inquisitions
of January
branches

I did not,
said Beauty,
find myself
uncriminal.

The animals we were
were convicted
by the machineries.

I too was guilty
- a monk
wrapped in meat.

READING LIST

After Nature: A Politics for the Anthropocene
by Jedediah Purdy

Between Heaven & Earth
by Laura A. Huxley

The Blue Clerk: Ars Poetica in 59 Versos
by Dionne Brand

The Collected Poems of Édouard Glissant
by Édouard Glissant

Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle
by Katherine McKittrick

The Future of the Body: Explorations Into the Further Evolution of Human Nature
by Michael Murphy

A Handbook of Disappointed Fate
by Anne Boyer

Ibn 'Arabi: Selected Poems
by Ibn Arabi

The Little Flowers of St. Francis of Assisi
by Valentine Long

The Matrix: Poems, 1960–1970
by Norman Pritchard

Rare Plants of Colorado
by Colorado Native Plant Society

Sentient Flesh: Thinking in Disorder, Poiesis in Black
by R.A. Judy

Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene
by Donna J. Haraway

Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature
by William Cronon

PLANTS

Achillea millefolium
Achnatherum hymenoides
Agastache foeniculum 'Blue Fortune'
Alcea rosea 'Blacknight'
Amelanchier spp.
Anemone canadensis
Anthyrium filix-femina
Aquilegia alpina
Aquilegia caerulea
Aquilegia canadensis 'Little Lanterns'
Artemisia dracuncululus
Artemisia ludoviciana
Bouteloua gracilis 'Blonde Ambition'
Calendula officinalis 'Radio'
Campanula rotundifolia
Clematis 'Jackmanii Superba'
Clematis spp.
Clematis terniflora
Coreopsis lanceolata
Cornus sericea 'Artic Fire'
Dicentra spectabilis 'Valentine'
Digitalis purpurea 'Camelot Cream'
Digitalis purpurea 'Camelot Lavender'
Digitalis purpurea 'Camelot Mix'
Digitalis purpurea 'Camelot Rose'

Echinacea purpurea 'Magnus'
Gaillardia aristata
Geranium x 'Roazanne'
Iris siberica 'Caesars Brother'
Liatris punctata
Lonicera x heckrottii 'Goldflame'
Lupinus polyphyllus 'Gallery Blue'
Lupinus polyphyllus 'Gallery White'
Lupinus polyphyllus 'Gallery Yellow'
Mahonia repens
Mugo spp.
Nepeta faassenii 'Six Hills Giant'
Penstemon "Elfin Pink"
Phlox subulata
Picea abies 'Pendula'
Populus deltoides
Potentilla
Ratibida columnifera
Ribes uva-crispa
Rubus spp.
Rudbeckia fulgida 'Goldstrum'
Sagina subulata
Sagina subulata 'Aurea'
Salvia officinalis
Sedum spp.
Sporobolus heterolepis
Stachys byzantina 'Silver Carpet'
Thymus pseudolanuginosus
Veronica pectinata
Creeping Mahonia - *Mahonia Repens*
Blue Chip Juniper - *Juniperus horizontalis*
Japanese Tree Lilac - *Syringa reticulata*
Weeping Willow Tree - *Salix babylonica*
Weeping Spruce - *Picea abies* 'Pendula'
Blue Fescue - *Festuca glauca*
Coneflower - *Echinacea mangus*
Euonymus alatus - *Winged Burning Bush*
Virginia creeper - *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*
Catmint - *Nepeta*

Aster macrophyllus 'Twilight'
Additional Suggestions for Winter Gardens
Kinnickinick
creeping cotoneaster 'Toms Thumb'
White Bud Mugo
Red Twig Dogwood
Yellow Twig Dogwood
Common yarrow
Rocky Mountain Sumac - *Rhus glabra cismontana*
smooth Sumac - *Rhus glabra*
Prairie Willow - *Salix humilis*
Scotch Pine hillside creeper
Coral Bells - *Heuchera*
Autumn Jazz Viburnum
Dwarf Blue Rabbitbrush
Ilex (Holly) Berry Poppins
Tufted Hair Grass
Shrub Rose
Diablo Ninebark
Purple Fountain Grass
Crimson Pygmy Barberry
Alpine Carpet Juniper



ABOUT THE ASPEN ART MUSEUM

Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums in 1979, the Aspen Art Museum is a thriving and globally engaged non-collecting contemporary art museum. Following the 2014 opening of the museum's facility designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Shigeru Ban, the AAM enjoys increased attendance, renewed civic interaction, and international media attention. In July 2017, the AAM was one of ten institutions to receive the United States' National Medal for Museum and Library Services for its educational outreach to rural communities in Colorado's Roaring Fork Valley and its fostering of learning partnerships with civic and cultural partners within a 100-mile radius of the museum's Aspen location.

Aspen Art Museum
637 East Hyman Avenue
Aspen, Colorado 81611

aspenartmuseum.org
(970) 925-8050

Hours
Tuesday-Sunday, 10 AM-6 PM
Closed Mondays

Admission to the AAM is free courtesy of Amy and John Phelan.

Every Earthly Morning the Sky's Light touches Ur life is Unprecedented in its Beauty is curated by Claude Adjil, AAM Curator at Large.

Landscape design by Bluegreen: Rio Crandall

Sculpture fabrication by angus studio

Soil provided by Paonia Soil Co., Colorado's living organic Supersoil

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Nancy and Bob Magoon Director
Nicola Lees

Assistant Curator
Simone Krug

Exhibitions Director
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Installation Director
Jonathan Hagman

Installation Managers
Eric Angus
Charlie Childress

Editor
Monica Adame Davis

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