

# RENA BRANSTEN GALLERY

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***When We Move: A View of Technology through a Black Lens***

**Rodney Ewing & Nyame Brown**

**May 11 – June 29, 2024**

**Artist Talk and Reception June 1 | Talk 4:30PM; Reception 5-7PM**

Rena Bransten Gallery is pleased to present a two-person exhibition of Rodney Ewing and Nyame Brown, *When We Move: A View of Technology through a Black Lens*. This exhibition originated at the Art and Art History Gallery at Santa Clara University and is curated by Pancho Jiménez.

Taking the essay “Technology & Ethos, Vol. 2 Book of Life” by Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones) as a framework, Ewing and Brown created paintings, drawings, works on paper, and objects reflecting on and conceptualizing new technologies, ranging from mass communication to space travel, as they pertain to the specific needs of a Black diasporic community.

Ewing states, “Baraka’s essay challenges Norbert Wiener’s thesis that ‘Machines are an extension of their inventor creators’ by stating, ‘That is not simple once you think. Machines, the entire technology of the West, is just that, the technology of the West.’ In his writing, Baraka brings up several points that dare the reader as a Black creator to think about what ingenuity could look like free of as he puts it the ‘European restraint which first means the restraint of self-determined mind development. Think what would be the results of the unfettered blood inventor-creator with the resources of a nation behind him. To imagine—to think—to construct—to energize!!!’ Baraka states that ‘nothing has to look or function the way it does.’ This statement not only serves as a cry to dismantle the tendency to emulate western technology as hardware or software, but also to think concretely of the need for spirituality in our constructs. Baraka posits ‘what is our spirit, what will it project? What machines will it produce? What will they achieve? What will be their morality? Machines have the morality of their inventors.’ In order to make a ‘new’ technology that is more holistic in origin, Baraka is imploring that any new technology must be spiritually oriented because it must serve to raise consciousness and spirituality.

So, how does the Black community become architects, engineers, and artists responsible for this intersection of culture, imagination, technology, and spirituality? How would technology appear and function in form and aspiration? ... The goal of the exhibition is not to speculate solely on Science Fiction, but to also embody the ‘human striving’ that Baraka points out as paramount. In [Baraka’s] words, ‘It must represent at each point the temporary perfection of the evolutionary man. And be obsolete only because nothing is ever perfect, the only constant is change.’”

**Nyame Brown** is an Afrofuturist installation artist who works in painting, drawing, cut paper, blackboards, augmented reality, gaming, and fashion. His work addresses the Black imagination as a space for new ways to perceive the Diaspora as trans-Atlantic, psychic, and imagined—not just through unity and similarity, but also by looking at the dynamics of difference.

Brown received his BFA from The School of The Art Institute of Chicago, and MFA from Yale School of Art and Architecture. He is a recipient of the Joan Mitchell Painters and Sculptors Award, and the Richard Dreihaus Foundation Individual Artist Award. He has held residencies at the Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA; the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Omaha, NE; and the Joan Mitchell Center, New Orleans, LA. He has held solo exhibitions across the U.S., notably at the Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, CA; Hearst Museum at St. Mary’s College, Moraga, CA; and the West Virginia University Art Museum, Morgantown.

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**Rodney Ewing** is a visual artist whose drawings, installations, and mixed media focus on the intersection of body and place, memory and fact, re-examining human histories, cultural conditions, and trauma. Rodney received his BFA at Louisiana State University and his MFA from West Virginia University.

Ewing's work has been included in numerous group and solo exhibitions, including the Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, CA; the Drawing Center, New York, NY; the Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; Jack Shainman Gallery, Kinderhook, NY. Ewing is a grantee of the San Francisco Art Commission Individual Artist Grant (2016-2020) and a 2022-2023 Pollack-Krasner Award recipient. He has been an Artist-in-Residence at the de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA; the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, CA; Djerassi, Woodside, CA; Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA, Bemis Center for the Arts, Omaha, Nebraska; NARS, Brooklyn, NY; and Fountainhead, Miami, FL. His work is included in the collections of the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, CA; Fairfield University Art Museum, CT; and Tisch Library at Tufts University, Medford, MA, among others.