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Psylos, Steven. "Midnight's Daydream," *Trace*, January 2007.

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PHOTO AMIR EBRAHIMI

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MIDNIGHT'S DAYDREAM

Three of this generation's strongest visual artists exhibit works from their year in residency at the renowned Studio Museum of Harlem

■ text **STEVEN PSYLLOS** ■ photography **AMIR EBRAHIMI**

The Studio Museum uptown does it again. Not only are their exhibitions consistently notable, but their programs for nourishing emerging artists in the community are unparalleled. This past year's artists-in-residence are three of this generation's strongest working artists on the rise: Demetrius Oliver, Titus Kaphar, and Wardell Milan II. The three were chosen to share studio space within the museum for a year, and given a small stipend to support their efforts. The work that was created in that period is represented in "Midnight's Daydream," a group exhibition that generated buzz from all of the art world players. More interesting, these three artists have now taken their friendship to the next level and are looking for a studio together downtown and proposing to take their show on the road.



TITUS KAPHAR

Age: 31

Titus Kaphar heard about the residency from Rashawn Griffin, last year's occupant, while in grad school at Yale. An exceptional painter who replicates historical portraiture and exposes just how distorted a visage can be, Titus addresses "American history that is there but hidden and very rarely talked about."

What were your aspirations for this residency?

It's an opportunity to work: they give you space, they give you time, they'll introduce you to people and get your work out there. It sounded like a great opportunity, but I never expected what I actually got: a community of artists that are tight-knit and willing to tell me the truth about my work and push me to go further. Demetrius and Wardell, those guys have helped my work grow by leaps and bounds.

The fact that you guys get along so well is really unique and a great story in itself. Each person's style is so unique, but the personalities just work...

That's really what it's about, because it's not like all of our work feels the same, or talks about the same thing. It's more about the relationship that formed out of this situation. I know I can go to Demetrius' studio and I know that I can call him over to my studio and talk to him and bounce ideas. I know he'll be honest with me and I trust both of their opinions and part of the relationship is helping you trust your own opinion as well.

What are trying to accomplish as an artist?

I'm a painter, and painters deal in illusion and metaphor. But I want to make physical paintings, and do away with all the illusions. I don't want to just talk about destroying a painting, or folding a painting or cutting or spray painting over a painting. I wanted to do it physically. I don't want it to be just another metaphor, I want it to be a real act. For me, this is a physical dissection of art history, taking it to the operating table, cutting it open, looking inside, putting some pieces over here to the side, and looking deeper to see what I can find.

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