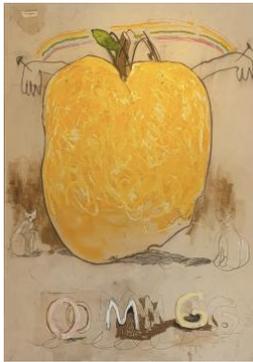


Joseph Olisaemeka Wilson: *OMG (how to find God)*

Fergus McCaffrey St. Barth

March 24 – May 15, 2022



Fergus McCaffrey is pleased to present *OMG (how to find God)*, a solo exhibition of works by New York-based artist Joseph Olisaemeka Wilson, on view at the gallery's St. Barth location, March 24 through May 15, 2022.

Joseph Olisaemeka Wilson (b. 1999) stands at the forefront of a new wave of art that transfigures mimesis and form alongside personally embodied visions, narratives, and cosmologies. Wilson's unique practice mediates lived terrain—the ecologically endangered land on which we dwell, the virtual spaces and platforms where we increasingly connect, and the metaphorical spaces and places of our embodied identity—and our understanding of temporality. Featuring painting, sculpture, and works on paper, the exhibition spotlights the artist's transcendence of time and place into a newly synthesized amalgam of the future, past, and present.

This tendency to treat art as a vehicle for time travel could naturally be characterized as a response to the many technologies that this generation of young artists grew up with, which has so intensely manipulated our collective sense of time. The chronological succession of events in timelines and feeds are algorithmically shuffled—one could be looking at something from last night, when suddenly a memory from ten years ago fills the screen. But Wilson's practice evinces an awe-struck, land-born rebellion against the strictures of time that is uniquely idiosyncratic and personal. His approach succeeds Nietzsche's anthropomorphic written overtures to "every [human] name in history"¹ by visually embracing the union of animality, post-humanity, and technology.

The recurring characters, symbols, and motifs in his works—solo alligators, sidelined cats, roaring bears, traffic cones, golden apples, idol figures, moving trains, social media advertisements, computer servers—act as portals and conduits, bridging land and time. *Golden Apple Crucified*, 2022, symphonically gathers the characters of the cat and the golden apple and dramaturgically places them at the scene of a rainbow crucifixion. Oriented at the juncture of a land patrolled by placid cats and a cloudless rainbow scaffold of a sky, the painting announces the ghastly deed with an internet meme: "OMG."



In *Liberty Crosses Into Fall*, 2022, a seated woman sits atop a RAM storage drive, her right hand taking shape of that of Lady Liberty's iconic stance, a burning apple in-hand; she holds an animated crucifix to her left that mimicks her Liberty form, playfully raising a traffic cone in its own statue-esque demeanor. Such reconfiguration of historic elements in a trans-chronological frame is central to the Wilson's practice, obsessively rotating cycles of elementary existence alongside cycles of human technology and communication. A closer look at the artist's work reveals how technology and nature remain

separate while rotating together; as demonstrated by Wilson, technology mirrors the circulation of nature as nature mirrors the circulation of technology.

About Fergus McCaffrey

Founded in 2006, Fergus McCaffrey is internationally recognized for its groundbreaking role in promoting the work of postwar Japanese artists such as Sadamasa Motonaga, Kazuo Shiraga and Jiro Takamatsu. The gallery also exhibits the work of emerging and seminal Western artists including Anna Conway, Marcia Hafif, Birgit Jürgenssen, Richard Nonas, Sigmar Polke and Carol Rama. In keeping with the gallery's commitment to Japanese art and culture, McCaffrey opened its Tokyo outpost in March 2018. Fergus McCaffrey has locations in New York, St. Barth, and Tokyo.

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Images:

1. Joseph Olisaemeka Wilson, *Golden Apple Crucified*, 2022. Acrylic on canvas with crayon, charcoal, and collage, 72 x 52 inches (182.9 x 132.1 cm) © Joseph Olisaemeka Wilson
2. Joseph Olisaemeka Wilson, *Liberty Crosses Into Fall*, 2022. Crayon, pencil, and pen on paper, 10 x 9 inches (25.4 x 22.9 cm) © Joseph Olisaemeka Wilson

¹ Nietzsche, F. (1889, January 6). Letter to Burckhardt.