



DEVAN SHIMOYAMA

SHIFT

January 26 - March 21, 2026

Devan Shimoyama draws equally from classical mythology and the cultural landscape of his youth to create works that center the Queer Black male form. Through self-portraiture and tableaux, he reflects on the politics of Queer experience while navigating his own personal narrative.

Working across a wide range of materials and techniques, Shimoyama explores the tension between celebration and silence within Queer culture and sexuality. Referencing the dramatic sensibilities of painters such as Caravaggio and Goya, he layers his surfaces with jewels, glitter, rhinestones, and sequins to evoke both the beauty and alienation of the Black Queer body.

His most recent body of work is inspired by the Major Arcana of the Tarot deck. Shimoyama stages scenes of transformation alluding to the dialogue between genuine and superficial change. The series reflects on our desire to present contained and perfect versions of ourselves, while suggesting how forms of mysticism, such as tarot reading, can illuminate new pathways through turbulent times.

“My work seeks to examine and uplift the indomitable spirit of the Queer Black male in today’s social climate. A certain reticence about gay male sexuality comes into question, followed by an exploration of locating the Queer Black male body’s role in society and even within the microcosm of gay male politics. Divination, fairy tale, folklore, and mythology greatly influence the narrative element within my paintings as I build my own creation myth of the Queer Black male. I use the language of classical mythology and contemporary stereotype to illuminate a small fraction of that identity.

In *Shift*, the works feature a range of ways in which I think of transformation and shapeshifting, particularly in its relation to one’s understanding of self. In the paintings, I reimagine various Major Arcana Tarot card compositions, allowing my own impulses and symbols to intermingle with the preexisting canon of artists’, illustrators’, and practitioners’ imagery. Self-portraits donning the hairstyles of music icons reference both drag performers as well as my own lighthearted attempts during childhood to embrace my own Queerness and femininity.

Large-scale portraits of iconic cinematic Black female vampiresses playfully celebrate the power and sensuality of transformation. I use fantasy and fiction to imagine ways to solve real problems and to discover new things about how we navigate the world.”

-Devan Shimoyama

Exhibition Checklist

Images courtesy De Buck Gallery



Devan Shimoyama is a visual artist who works primarily in painting and self-portraiture, with works inspired as much by classical mythology as by the culture of his youth. Through his depictions of the Queer Black male form, Shimoyama investigates the politics of Queer culture while navigating his own personal narratives. Shimoyama graduated from Penn State University in 2011 with a BFA in Drawing/Painting. He received his MFA from Yale University School of Art in Painting/Printmaking in 2014. Shimoyama's work has been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions throughout the United States. His solo exhibition *Cry, Baby* was presented at the Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, PA in 2018. Other major current and recent exhibitions include *Devan Shimoyama* in The Regional, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO, USA; *When We See Us*, Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa, Cape Town, South Africa; *Oh, Gods of Dust and Rainbows*, at FRONT International Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art, Cleveland, OH, USA; *All the Rage*, at Kunstpalais, Erlangen, Germany, Shimoyama's debut European solo museum exhibition. He lives and works in Pittsburgh, PA and is represented by De Buck Gallery, New York.



L'Empereur, 2025
Oil, colored pencil, fabric, sequins, glitter, and Flashe on canvas stretched over panel
84 x 68 inches



La Maison Dieu (The Tower), 2025
Oil, colored pencil, Flashe, and glitter on canvas
84 x 66 inches



L'Imperatrice (The Empress), 2023
Oil, colored pencil, Flashe, glitter, carpet, sequins, fabric, jewelry and acrylic stretched over panel
84 x 68 inches



Le Chariot, 2025
Oil, colored pencil, glitter, collage, clothing, Flashe, wire, and costume jewelry on canvas stretched over panel
84 x 68 inches



Akasha, 2021

Oil paint, color pencil, glitter, acrylic, costume jewelry, rhinestones, and collage on canvas stretched over panel
72 x 72 inches



Vampira, 2021

Oil, colored pencil, glitter, acrylic, rhinestones, and collage on canvas stretched over panel
72 x 72 inches



Summer (VI), 2019

Chains, silk flowers, rhinestones, beads, and fabric on swing seat
26 x 12 x 14 inches



Summer (VII), 2019

Chains, silk flowers, rhinestones, beads, and fabric on swing seat
26 x 12 x 14 inches



Self Portrait as Ronnie, 2022

Oil, colored pencil, glitter, fabric, collage, jewelry, sequins, Flashe, acrylic, and embellishments on canvas stretched over panel
48 x 36 inches



Summer (VIII), 2019

Chains, silk flowers, rhinestones, beads, and fabric on swing seat
26 x 12 x 14 inches



Summer (IX), 2022

Chains, silk flowers, rhinestones, beads, and fabric on swing seat
26 x 12 x 14 inches



Geb, 2025

Oil, colored pencil, glitter, collage, Swarovski crystals, acrylic, and Flashe on canvas stretched over panel
48 x 60 inches



Nu, 2024

Oil, colored pencil, glitter, collage, Swarovski crystals, acrylic, and Flashe on canvas stretched over panel
48 x 60 inches



February, 2020

Silk flowers, beads, and rhinestones on fabric with steel mount and frame
52 x 78 x 9 inches

ROWAN UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

Rowan University Art Gallery & Museum serves as a vibrant cultural destination for South Jersey, the Rowan community, and surrounding region. We are committed to cultivating an inclusive, accessible, and just environment that encourages dialogue and collaboration between exhibiting artists, students, faculty, and the general public through the presentation of interdisciplinary art exhibitions, artist talks and other public programming. Our mission is to present diverse forms of contemporary art by professional artists with content that is thought provoking, relevant, and timely. With our exhibitions and programming, we seek to engender curiosity and a passion for contemporary art, enrich the quality of life for area residents, and create a welcoming and inclusive cultural destination at Rowan University.

301 High Street Gallery
301 High Street West
Glassboro, NJ 08028

Gallery Hours
Mon-Fri, 10:00 - 5:00 PM
Sat, 11:00 - 5:00 PM

Information
rowan.edu/artgallery
artgallery@rowan.edu

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