

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2025

**MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY GALLERIES PRESENTS THE EXHIBITION
LAYO BRIGHT: *INVASIVE BLOOMS***

ON VIEW FEBRUARY 1 THROUGH MAY 4, 2025



Layo Bright. *Bloom in hues of Blue, Green, Brown*, 2024.
Cast, blown, fused, mirrored glass, and 23k gold leaf on custom frame.

46 x 37 x 6 inches.

Installation view from *Layo Bright: Dawn and Dusk*,
The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, 2024.

Courtesy of the artist. Photography by Jason Mandella.

Montclair, NJ — Montclair State University Galleries is proud to announce *Invasive Blooms*, a solo exhibition by artist Layo Bright, on view from February 1 to May 4, 2025 in the Alexander Kasser Theater Cases. Bright explores themes of time, feminism, migration, and the African diaspora. Her practice employs blown, fused, and cast glass processes, along with textiles, wood, and ceramics, to engage ideas about individual and community identity.

The exhibition features recent and new works, including the debut of an hourglass sculpture symbolizing the passage of time and *Bloom* portraits, a collaborative project with the Montclair State University community.

Bright's *Bloom* series celebrates resilience and identity, created through intricate glass portraits of women from her community. These works pair cast face molds with individually crafted glass flowers, chosen for their symbolic connection to migration and cultural narratives. For *Invasive Blooms*, the artist invited Montclair students, faculty, and staff to share their migration stories. These stories have been incorporated into the works, making each piece a deeply personal and community-centered creation.

“Glass is a wonderful medium,” Bright explains. “It’s fragile, yet resilient. In the *Bloom* series, I aim to capture the strength of women and their stories through this material, exploring migration, beauty, and cycles of life. Collaborating with the Montclair State University community has added a special layer, allowing the works to reflect personal experiences and voices in a way I’ve never done before.”

Other exhibition highlights include her Gele sculptures, inspired by the traditional West African headwraps worn by women. These works delve into historical and cultural narratives of adornment within African and Black diasporic traditions. Bright reimagines these headdresses, connecting the past to the present and celebrating the legacy of matrilineal empowerment. Bright’s exploration of migration extends into the use of “Ghana Must Go” bags. These woven plastic bags, once associated with the mass expulsion of West African migrants from Nigeria in the 1980s, feature prominently on the undersides of leaves in the exhibition’s sculptures. This subtle but powerful reference serves as a link to Bright’s abstract paintings, such as in *Horizon Line 1 & 2*, where the bag patterns feature prominently, emphasizing their versatility as a medium for storytelling.

Layo Bright’s practice is rooted in creating works that encourage reflection, dialogue, and a sense of shared humanity. *Invasive Blooms* is an invitation to engage with the beauty and complexity of migration, heritage, and the stories that shape us all.

Layo Bright (b. 1991 in Lagos, Nigeria; lives and works in Brooklyn, New York) received a law degree from Babcock University in 2014 and an MFA from the Parsons School of Design in 2018. She has exhibited her work at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgewood, CT; Museum of Glass, Tacoma, WA; MICA’s Meyerhoff Gallery, Baltimore, MD; Smack Mellon, Brooklyn, NY; Sean Kelly Gallery, New York, NY; and Halsey Mckay Gallery, East Hampton, NY.

This exhibition is organized by Montclair State University Galleries and curated by Director Megan C. Austin.

Digital Engagement

The University Galleries is a proud partner of Bloomberg Connects, the free arts and culture app created by Bloomberg Philanthropies. The Bloomberg Connects app, available for download from Google Play or the App Store, makes the University Galleries accessible for onsite or offsite visits through photo, audio, and video features that offer insights into past and current exhibitions from artists, curators, professors, students, and more. The Galleries’ joins over 750 cultural organizations worldwide with exclusive digital guides on Bloomberg Connects.

Public Hours

Monday – Friday: 12 – 6 p.m.

All programs are free and open to the public.

Programs & Events

Artist Reception

Tuesday, February 4

5 – 7 p.m.

Alexander Kasser Theater Lobby

Meet artist Layo Bright at the opening of Montclair State University Galleries’ Spring 2025 exhibition. 6 p.m. Remarks by the artist and Director Megan C. Austin

Art Forum

Monday, February 10

5:20 p.m.

Calcia Hall 135

Art Forum is a speaker series featuring artists, designers, art historians, curators, and art critics from around the world presenting their work and ideas in an open forum, hosted by the Department of Art & Design. Layo Bright will discuss her latest work in the exhibition *Invasive Blooms*.

About Montclair State University Galleries

The Montclair State University Galleries brings together ideas, perspectives, and dialogues to foster curiosity and shared understandings through art. The University Galleries presents diverse and inclusive exhibitions and programs, creating connections that unite the campus experience with local and global communities. www.montclair.edu/galleries

All exhibitions and programs are free and open to the public.

Social Media

Join the conversation on social media by tagging @montclairstategalleries and using the hashtag #MontclairStateGalleries when posting.

Support

This exhibition is made possible, in part, by funds from the McMullen Family Foundation, the College of the Arts, and private contributions.

Media Contact

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