

NEWSLETTER

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Akinsanya Kambon's Depictions of Black Resistance, on Display in Two New York Exhibitions



Left: Akinsanya Kambon's "The Birth of the Vanguard — Celebrating 50 Years of the BPP (Lid)" (2016). Right: Kambon's "Queen Nanny of the Jamaican Maroons & Her Lieutenants" (2021). © Akinsanya Kambon, courtesy of the artist and Pan African Art Gallery, Long Beach, Calif.

The California-born ceramist and painter Akinsanya Kambon, 79, was still a teenager when, in 1966, he was deployed to the front lines of the Vietnam War as a member of the Marine Corps and a combat illustrator. While overseas, he joined what were called Soul Sessions, regular meetings organized by other African American servicemen, in which he learned about the United States' violent imperial history. Upon his return to the United States, Kambon joined the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense and eventually became the lieutenant of culture for the Sacramento chapter. Around the same time, he began making art that reveals hidden parts of American history, some of which will be on view later this month in a two-venue exhibition in New York. SculptureCenter in Long Island City, Queens, will present Kambon's figurative ceramics, which draw on African mythologies; in the West Village, the Center for Art, Research and Alliances will show his paintings and drawings, some featuring Black soldiers and cowboys, alongside archival materials such as press clippings and photographs of Kambon with figures like Huey P. Newton and Toni Morrison. *"Akinsanya Kambon: Soul Sessions"* will be on view from May 28 through Aug. 16, sculpture-center.org, cara-nyc.org. — Yaniya Lee