



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ahkeem Shaw Opens in Art Melanated's SAVAGE Emerging Artist Exhibition at Band of Vices

Launch Day Collection Now On View Through March 14, 2026 | Los Angeles

Los Angeles, CA – February 14, 2026 — The doors have officially opened.

Ahkeem Shaw's *Launch Day* collection is now on view at **Band of Vices** as part of the inaugural **SAVAGE Emerging Artist Exhibition**, presented by **Art Melanated**.

Selected as a finalist for the national competition, Shaw's work now stands in conversation with a powerful cohort of emerging voices shaping the future of contemporary art. The exhibition, which opened February 14, runs through March 14, 2026.

Curated by Art Melanated and juried by a distinguished panel of collectors and curators, SAVAGE honors the legacy of trailblazing sculptor and educator **Augusta Savage**, whose mission to create access and opportunity for Black artists continues to resonate across generations.

Opening night reflected that spirit — a room filled with collectors, cultural leaders, artists, and community — gathering not just to observe, but to engage.

Momentum around *Launch Day* was already building prior to the exhibition, with three original paintings from the collection acquired by collectors ahead of opening night. That early support signaled what the room affirmed: Shaw's visual language — rooted in imagination, resilience, and the courage to take a leap — connects.

"Being selected as a finalist for SAVAGE is an honor," said Shaw. "To have this work shown at Band of Vices, alongside other powerful emerging voices, feels like an important moment in the journey."

For Peppers Media Group, the moment reflects a broader trajectory.

"This exhibition marks an inflection point," said Daimion Peppers, CEO of Peppers Media Group. "To see *Launch Day* resonate nationally — and to open in Los Angeles with this level of energy — speaks to the universality of the story Ahkeem is telling."

The exhibition continues with additional programming and media features planned throughout its run.

Launch Day Collection Details

[Click here to view the Launch Day Collection](#)

Exhibition Details

SAVAGE Emerging Artist Exhibition

Finalist Exhibition Featuring Ahkeem Shaw

Exhibition Details

SAVAGE Emerging Artist Exhibition

Winner: **Ahkeem Shaw**

On View: February 14 – March 14, 2026

Location:

Band of Vices

1700 S. Santa Fe Ave, Suite 371

Los Angeles, CA 90021



Notes to editor

About Peppers Media Group

Peppers Media Group (PMG) is a multidisciplinary media and creative company operating at the intersection of art, culture, and technology. Through its ecosystem—including artist representation, cultural programming, and innovative publishing—PMG supports emerging talent and builds platforms that elevate storytelling, creative expression, and community impact.

About Ahkeem Shaw

Ahkeem Shaw is a visual artist working across painting, murals, and public installations. His practice explores imagination, cultural memory, and shared experience, creating work that invites people to gather, reflect, and connect. Shaw's *Launch Day* collection debuted during Miami Art Week and continues to gain national attention for its emotional resonance and accessible visual language.

About SAVAGE

The SAVAGE Emerging Artist Competition brings together a curated selection of emerging artists whose work is exhibited at a leading Los Angeles gallery. Chosen by a respected panel of collectors, curators, and industry professionals, SAVAGE offers a national platform for new voices and bold creative visions. Named in honor of Augusta Savage—who opened the Salon of Contemporary Negro Art in Harlem in 1939—the competition continues her mission of uplifting emerging artists and celebrating the transformative power of art.

About Art Melanated

Founded by husband-and-wife team Sol Aponte and Jennia Fredrique Aponte, Art Melanated is a national arts and culture platform rooted in visibility, preservation, and celebration. What began as a documentary initiative has evolved into a nomadic movement—curating exhibitions, summits, and creative experiences that amplify artists of the diaspora. Guided by intention, love, and community, Art Melanated is committed to activating art with purpose and building lasting cultural impact.

About Band of Vices

Established in 2015, Band of Vices is an internationally recognized platform for art and culture dedicated to emerging and mid-career artists, with a deep commitment to inclusion. Founded on the belief that what was once labeled a “vice” for marginalized communities is now a source of power, Band of Vices rejects exclusivity and embraces uniqueness, diversity, and love—creating space for historically undervalued voices to be seen and celebrated.

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