

# SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Rising artist Emmanuel Louisnord Desir has his eyes set on making a big splash in the art world. By Bianca Gracie

Emmanuel Louisnord Desir, "Home of the Free, Land of the Brave" (2022)



Emmanuel Louisnord Desir, a Brooklyn-raised and Los Angeles-based artist, offers a youthful interpretation of the Bible while also exploring the various cycles of relationships—whether familial, church-based or romantic.

A sculptor and painter, Desir discovered his passion for art as a toddler. “Ever since I was 3 years old, I would watch my older brother Max draw *Dragon Ball Z* and *Yu-Gi-Oh!* characters,” he recalls. “Every time he would make a mark, I would make the same one in my notebook. I just wanted to be like him. My father was a handyman of all kinds of trades and would oil paint and use different tools to make things, I wanted to be like him too.”

Desir’s talent has led to solo exhibitions at 47 Canal in New York, François Ghebaly in Los Angeles and Jupiter Contemporary in Miami. Now, he’s prepping for his second solo showcasing at 47 Canal (47canal.us).

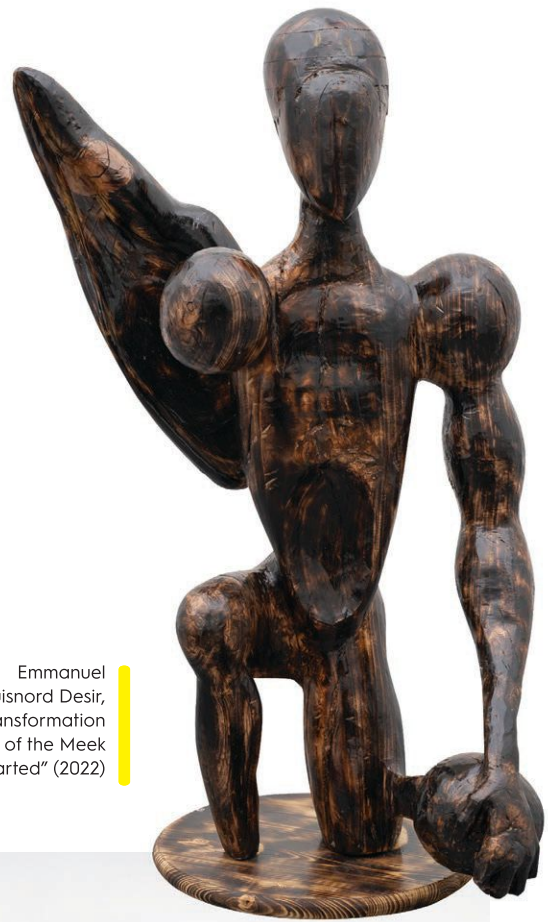
### Can you discuss the journey leading to your upcoming presentation?

The title of the show is called *Ashes of Zion* and it’s an amalgamation of my interests in materials like wood and metal and in Biblical stories and prophecies. At this stage of my practice, I’m using

painting, sculpture and visual abstraction to speak to the spiritual connections between the Israelite tribes in the Bible and those affected by the many slave trades and the diaspora today.

### How do Bible parables play a role in your work’s storytelling?

Sometimes the events in the Bible speak to me on a level that calls for an ode or homage to them; sometimes it’s more collagelike. Taking from different parts to create a whole. I see my work as an outlet to investigate these stories and their spiritual significance in relation to the



Emmanuel Louisnord Desir, “Transformation of the Meek Hearted” (2022)



From top: Emmanuel Louisnord Desir, “Abraham and Isaac at Mt. Moriah” (2022); the artist.



many marginalized groups of today's time, whom my family and I stem from.

**Your sculptures also reflect the physical impact of relationships. I'd like to know the significance of capturing these nuances in physical form.**

These two pieces share my effort to communicate the human condition of servitude assumed by these groups today. These renditions of bodies are fused with forms speaking to utility (a bowl, or shelf). The idea of being exploited for the benefit of another, where one's humanity amounts to their usability.

**Do you find there's different ways to convey messages through sculptures versus paintings?**

Yes and no. I've usually made sculptures in a subtractive method and to speak to the human figure or objects. Painting has been more scenic, abstract and additive. Both mediums offer nuance and inspire different facets of thinking and associations that can be interchangeable in their conceptual and physical nature.

**I'm curious to know how your artwork fulfills you.** Art has transformed from something I did as a kid to fit in with my role models, an interest in constructing objects with varying materials and improving my craft, into a portal that allows me to give thanks to my power, investigate my identity, uplift with my people by sharing light. ▣

From left: Emmanuel Louisnord Desir, "Grandpa's Infirmity Couch" (2022); Emmanuel Louisnord Desir, "Feel'n Blue" (2021).



“GRANDPA'S INFIRMITY COUCH” PHOTO BY JOERG LOHSE; ALL OTHER PHOTOS BY RUBEN DIAZ; ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND 47 CANAL, NEW YORK





Emmanuel  
Louisnord Desir, "If  
I was a slave, I'd be  
in that field" (2022)