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***To See for Oneself***
**LaJuné McMillian**
October 29, 2026–January 9, 2027

**Opening reception:** Thursday, October 29, 6–8PM
**Gallery hours:** Tuesday–Saturday: 11AM–6PM

bitforms gallery is pleased to present *To See for Oneself*, a solo exhibition by LaJuné McMillian exploring the intersections of artificial intelligence, embodiment, collective consciousness, and ecological regeneration. Through immersive worldbuilding, interactive technology, and living systems, McMillian considers how emerging technologies might foster more reciprocal relationships between individuals, communities, and the natural world. Building on the artist's longstanding practice of meditation, prayer, and collective reflection, the exhibition proposes an alternative vision of AI grounded in care, local knowledge, and shared experience. Derived from the Ancient Greek *autopsia*, meaning "to see for oneself," the exhibition reimagines the autopsy as a spiritual and computational process of witnessing. Moving beyond the examination of the physical body, the work considers memory, consciousness, and the conditions that bring a being to the threshold between life, death, and transformation.

At the center of the installation is *The Portal's Keeper*, an avatar of McMillian's future self created using Unreal Engine. Visitors are invited to journey alongside the Keeper, engaging in dialogue that unfolds through questions of silence, courage, freedom, and the fragmented process of coming to know oneself. Rather than following a predetermined narrative, the experience develops through each participant's interaction, allowing meaning to emerge through an exchange between human and machine. *The Portal's Keepe*r is powered by a locally hosted language model developed from McMillian's own prayers and essays, alongside more than 1,300 prayers collected from visitors at the Frist Art Museum in 2024. Together, these contributions form a shared body of knowledge through which the system generates new connections and interpretations. In this way, the artist's voice and the reflections of a broader community become intertwined, suggesting new possibilities for collective authorship and distributed intelligence.

Unlike conventional cloud-based AI systems, the installation operates entirely within its own computing environment, without a cloud connection or remote access. Conversations remain within the physical space of the work, resisting the external extraction and circulation of data. This closed-loop approach proposes what McMillian describes as (re)generative AI: a model of intelligence rooted in reciprocity, accountability, and collective contribution rather than extraction and consumption. The work can only be encountered in person, emphasizing the importance of embodied presence in an increasingly mediated world.

The virtual environment is accompanied by a living hydroponic sculpture, connecting computational intelligence with ecological processes of growth, nourishment, and renewal. Functioning as both infrastructure and metaphor, the sculpture extends the project's central inquiry into the physical world. Together, the digital and organic elements establish a circular relationship in which visitors contribute knowledge, technology interprets and responds, and living systems embody the principles of regeneration and care.

*To See for Oneself* foregrounds human connection, self-sovereignty, and environmental stewardship. The exhibition invites viewers to consider how technologies might support collective care and community resilience, shifting the conversation from what AI can do for us toward the kinds of systems we wish to build and participate in.

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**LaJuné McMillian** is a new media artist, and Creative Technologist creating art that integrates performance, extended reality, and physical computing to question our current forms of communication. McMillian has shown and spoken about their work at Pioneer Works, National Sawdust, Leaders in Software and Art, Creative Tech Week, and Art && Code's Weird Reality. The artist was previously the Director of Skating at Figure Skating in Harlem, where they integrated STEAM and Figure Skating to teach girls of color about movement and technology. They have continued their research on

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Blackness, Movement, and Technology during residencies at Eyebeam, Pioneer Works, Barbarian Group, and Barnard College.