



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Public Art Fund Debuts Paul Anthony Smith's Public Art Presentation in Multi-City JCDecaux Bus Shelter Exhibition

Smith Transforms Urban Space With Perforated Portraits and Textured Landscapes



Paul Anthony Smith: Melodies from a running spring

July 9 – September 7, 2025

JCDecaux Bus Shelters in New York City, Boston, and Chicago

[ACCESS INSTALLATION PHOTOS](#)

July 8, 2025, New York, NY – Public Art Fund presents *Melodies from a running spring*, a new series of nine grayscale mixed media works by Paul Anthony Smith, displayed on over 300 JCDecaux bus shelters across New York City, Boston, and Chicago from July 9 through



September 7, 2025. The exhibition marks Smith's first solo public commission in New York City, and features *picotage*, a signature technique the artist began in 2012, puncturing the surfaces of his photographs with a handmade ceramic tool to add texture pattern and dimension to the images.

The exhibition expands on Smith's ongoing exploration of Black diasporic identity, memory, and the legacies of colonialism. By rendering the works in grayscale and exhibiting them in advertising spaces typically saturated with color, Smith rejects the glossy, tropical fantasies that often frame Jamaica in popular imagery. Instead, he reimagines the island from a more intimate perspective – one rooted in personal memory, ancestral knowledge, and spiritual resonance.

Smith photographed two Caribbean subjects, interdisciplinary artist Zachary Fabri and Olympic fencer Daryl Homer, amid lush, natural landscapes. Though their practices differ, Smith finds congruences in their life stories and physical movements. Fabri and Homer's mirrored poses and movements evoke what Smith calls "duppies," spirits from Jamaican folklore who traverse realms of the living and the dead, resisting containment in time or space.

Smith disrupts his images through *picotage* in various ways: backgrounds are sliced by geometric grids, the landscape is obscured by fields of perforation, and in some cases, the figures dissolve almost entirely into texture. The resulting works go beyond realistic documentation, instead pointing toward a more porous, dreamlike visual language.

"I'm thinking about walking along the land and hearing the natural sounds of birds, waterfalls, and wind passing through trees," says **Smith**. "In Jamaica, there's always a natural spring flowing, passing through different realms and thought routes. These works are about essence: the spirit, memory, movement, and how we navigate space."

Smith often describes his process as a form of drawing or choreography, a way to trace memory and gesture through the photographic surface. He layers references from his own life, world history, and Black spirituality to create images that resist fixed interpretation. Drawing inspiration from early modern European painting, Shakespearean drama, and ancestral storytelling, Smith treats *picotage* as both a conceptual and physical intervention – picking away at the image's surface to mark absence, presence, and transformation all at once.

"Popular narratives on the Caribbean are disseminated through advertisements, particularly to encourage tourism," says **Public Art Fund Assistant Curator Jenée-Daria Strand**. "Smith uses the platform to offer us images that forefront the mythic, the ecological, and the relational, pushing against expected representations of idyllic scenes. His practice feels especially



powerful in the public realm because it invites reflection on how often constructed narratives are consumed through images and adopted as truth.”

Paul Anthony Smith: Melodies from a running spring is curated by **Public Art Fund Assistant Curator Jenée-Daria Strand**.

@PublicArtFund #PaulAnthonySmith

WHEN & WHERE

Starting on July 9, 2025, *Melodies from a running spring* is on view on JCDecaux bus shelters throughout New York City, Chicago, and Boston. The exhibition can also be explored anytime, anywhere, on the free **Bloomberg Connects** app.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Paul Anthony Smith (b. Jamaica, 1988) creates paintings and picotage on pigment prints that explore the artist's autobiography, as well as issues of identity within the African diaspora. Referencing both W.E.B. Du Bois' concept of double consciousness and Franz Fanon's theory of diasporic cultural confusions caused by colonialism, Smith alludes to fences, borders, and barriers to conceal and alter his subjects and landscapes. Smith's practice celebrates the rich and complex histories of the post-colonial Caribbean and its people. Memory, migration and home are central to Smith's work, which probes questions of hybrid identities between worlds old and new. Smith's layered picotage is often patterned in the style of Caribbean breeze block fences and modernist architectural elements that function as veils, meant both to obscure and to protect Smith's subjects from external gaze. While photography typically functions as a way in which to reveal and share information, Smith's picotage has a concealing and purposefully perplexing effect. Forcing these nuanced diasporic histories into a singular picture plane, Smith encourages layers of unease within these outwardly jovial portraits. Picotage serves as an access point as Smith interrogates which elements of identity are allowed to pass through the complexities of borders and migration.

RELATED FREE PROGRAMMING

Public Art Fund Talks: Paul Anthony Smith

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July 16, 2025

6:30pm – 7:30pm

Jack Shainman Gallery, 46 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10013

Walking Tour with Paul Anthony Smith and Jenée-Daria Strand

Date TBA

NYC JCDecaux Bus Shelter locations



ABOUT PUBLIC ART FUND

As the leader in its field, Public Art Fund brings dynamic contemporary art to a broad audience in New York City and beyond by mounting ambitious free exhibitions of international scope and impact that offer the public powerful experiences with art and the urban environment. Begun in 2017, Public Art Fund's partnership with JCDecaux has grown to include fourteen exhibitions across seven cities around the globe.

ABOUT JCDECAUX

The JCDecaux Group is the number one outdoor advertising company worldwide, reaching more than 850 million people daily in over 80 countries and almost 4,000 cities. JCDecaux is working towards more sustainable spaces and is recognized for its extra-financial performance in the FTSE4Good (3.6/5), CDP (A Leadership), MSCI (AA), and has achieved Gold Medal status from EcoVadis. In the U.S., JCDecaux programs include airports, billboards, malls, as well as street furniture programs in New York, Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

SUPPORTS

Bloomberg Philanthropies is the presenting sponsor of *Paul Anthony Smith: Melodies from a running spring*.

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IMAGE CREDITS

Paul Anthony Smith

Melody #3, 2025

Unique picotage on inkjet print, mounted on museum board

Photo: Nicholas Knight, Courtesy of Public Art Fund, NY.

Presented by Public Art Fund as a part of *Paul Anthony Smith: Melodies of a running spring*, an exhibition on 300 JCDecaux bus shelters in New York, Chicago, and Boston, July 9 - Sept 7, 2025.