

# ARTLOG

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## Four Artists to Know: Meet the Johnsons



You're going to be seeing a lot more from these four artists named Johnson. They have studied at Yale, trekked through Northern Canada, been collected by Steve Martin, shown at the Hammer Museum and Blum & Poe, and been selected for an upcoming solo show at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

Matt Johnson is an LA-based, UCLA MFA artist in his early thirties. After his previous inclusion in a Hammer Museum show of LA artists, he continues to make a name for himself at Blum & Poe. In his current solo show, the bronze Hiroshima Buddha rises nine feet high, and a trapped light bulb shines within a mason jar. But where is the plug? The show at Blum & Poe "points to our inherent need to connect with the cosmos, our desire to understand it, and our attempts to control it."

Sarah Anne Johnson is a Canadian artist who completed her MFA at Yale in 2004 and shows at Julie Saul Gallery in Chelsea. Her travels span reforestation in Northern Canada and ecological volunteering in the Galapagos Islands. These works were created after a residency on a double-masted schooner in the Norwegian territory of the Arctic Circle: "It seemed so pristine and perfect, vast and strong, but also somehow delicate and fleeting. After such an experience, one can't help speculating about the impact we have on this planet."

Rashid Johnson is an artist born and educated in Chicago (MFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago) who first came to the attention of NYC after a show at the Studio Museum in Harlem at age 24. He is now represented by David Kordansky in LA, Monique Meloche in Chicago, and Richard Gray in New York. In 2012, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago presents his first major museum solo exhibition. These works use black soap, wax, books, branding irons, shea butter, oyster shells, space rock, and gold paint, materials that at David Kordansky seem "to suggest specific signifiers or pop cultural references." Yet, "he treats these merely as starting points, seeking to discover larger, even universal, themes that might be latent in their DNA."

**Kiel Johnson** is an LA-based artist who received his MFA at California State University, Long Beach. He currently shows at **Mark Moore** in LA and Davidson Contemporary in NYC, where his creations have impressed the likes of Cool Hunting, Fecal Face, and Steve Martin. Working in chipboard, wood, welded materials, and foam, nothing is out of reach for this master builder of the absurd. At Mark Moore, where he exhibited this summer with Cordy Ryman, "the works become a springboard for metaphorical investigations of the world."