E. Jane: Where there’s love overflowing
Exhibition Score

The Black Box is traditionally a space for performance, and the objects in this show perform.

Performer groups one, two, three, and four are all you can see in most of the install images, they set the scene.

Group one (a quintet): The text in the drawings (which some people will dare call prints because the digital space is somehow seen as less real) sing along with MHYSA, if you know the song “Home”. They are her backup singers. If you don’t know the song, they are interludes or spoken accompaniment, poetry sweetening the music in the room. The other elements of the drawings are intimate sets these singers perform inside of.

Group two (also a quintet): The text pieces painted in gouache directly on the walls—the most “real” “Art” of them all, except you can’t buy it unless you took the wall. They each speak across time in languages of authority (paint and history) to give an account of a performance of “Home”, written by Charlie Smalls. Each of these accounts is a moment where a diva of American popular music (read: R&B, Blues, Rock & Roll, Jazz) first proved she was a diva by performing a historically Black standard. The timeline starts when Stephanie Mills first breathed life into it, and ends with Jazmine Sullivan, the R&B queen of our contemporary time performing it as a young girl in a school play. Each painting points to a body and a voice.

All of the text in the Black Box act together to build a discussion around the song “Home.”

Group three (a trio): The bag sculpture and video are a video installation pretending to only be a sculpture in install photos. The video installation plays out loud. MHYSA’s voice acts as the lead singer, in a looped document of her performing “Home,” with the drawings backing her up. When performer four (the stage) is active, the bag becomes a set for the bodied performers (with endoskeletons, flesh, blood) with projections mapped onto it.

Performer four (a soloist): The Stage as sculpture—the diva object, ready for activation and dazzling in the absence of a body to hold. A perfect empty vessel. When activated, she commands attention, and the rest of the show is covered in darkness. A light show plays out around her, suddenly the entire exhibition is revealed as to be designed in a way that serves her and the flesh bodies she holds, the performers she holds up, she gives shape to the live performances.

Group five (also a quintet): The elements of the drawing in AR space when activated perform in real-time inside and around the drawings. They are the show’s backup dancers.

Performer six (also a soloist): The timeline video, also in AR space, reveals audio/visual reminders of all of the performances noted in the timeline, all the bodies, and voices, so the audience can reflect on them themselves, remember the first time they saw a copy of these performances, or find out about them for the first time.