

**NICOLA
VASSELL**

Opening March 21, 6–8 pm
March 21 — April 20, 2024

TERENCE NANCE

UNIVITELLIN



Gallery Hours

Tuesday–Saturday, 10 am–6 pm

138 10th Ave. New York, NY 10011

Press

For press inquiries, please reach out to the team at [ALMA](#).

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Nicola Vassell is delighted to present *Univitellin*, a special installation of Terence Nance's eponymous short film from 2016, and a selection of photographs from the artist's archive depicting family, faith and the synthesis of creative and spiritual practice. *Univitellin* recounts a fated and fractured love story. The narrative begins with a woman and a man who meet on a bus in Marseille, France, and fall for one another over the course of eighty-four hours. In this accelerated odyssey of intimacy—three and a half days collapsed into an eight-minute film—the audience follows the paramours from the halcyon of their courtship to the incidental tragedy that parts them.

For this iteration of the piece, the story is split into a two-panel projection—the mirrored perspectives of *Lui* and *Elle*. Positioned between both screens, the audience swivels in the orbit of the pair as their magnetism strengthens and their reality shifts. Translating to “of the same egg” in French, the title promises that—from the moment of their meeting—the young lovers' destinies will be indefinitely intertwined. Nance made *Univitellin* in recognition of the French New Wave, a movement that emerged in the cultural revolution of post-WWII Paris by a community of filmmakers who declared themselves auteurs and explored romanticized and stylized revisions of realism through their art. Adapting this cinematic tempo to a Black immigrant community in southern France, the audience comes to know these lovers through a montage of encounters; he notices her across a packed bus car, she bumps into him on a sidewalk, he teases her as they cuddle in bed, she argues with her mother about arranged marriage, he protects her from a group of attackers, they banter before parting ways after a date—all while an omniscient narrator remarks on their evolving serendipity, chemistry, and longing.

As in Nance's feature *An Oversimplification of Her Beauty* (2012), at the nexus of this film is a meditation on the elasticity and distortion of hours and days as they elapse in romance and art. *Univitellin* rests at the intersection of three inflections of time: the concrete chapters that delineate the relationship's development, the short-cut sequences that illustrate the progression of their passion, and the past and future lifetimes that capsize before their eyes while their intimacy swoons and splinters. As the heroine's mother declares to her as she attempts to take her daughter's fate into her own hands, “I apologize for rushing through this, but our time is limited.”

The selection of photographs accompanying *Univitellin* illustrates Nance's reverence for, and kinship with, his matriarchal forebears. A group of portraits from his family archive depicts his great grandmother, grandmothers, and mother, who is costumed for a theatrical role as the oracle in *Macbeth*—captured by Nance's father, Norvis Nance. On the opposite wall hangs a photograph Nance took in Recife, Brazil, while observing the Candomblé ritual Noite dos Tambores Silenciosos (Night of the Silent Drum). This Carnival rite exalts the spirits of all West Africans who were enslaved and brought to Brazil. In this street scene, a woman dressed as Yemaya—queen of the sea and mother of all—parades. He classifies this moment as an inflection point in his spiritual journey. Whether communing with fictional characters, his ancestors, living elders, or time itself, Nance's creative and ritual practices are inseparable; to him, both are altars for a shared prayer.

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About Terence Nance

Terence Nance (b. 1982 in Dallas, Texas) is an actor, artist, filmmaker, musician, and writer, living and working in Baltimore, Maryland. His filmography includes short films such as *You & I & You*, *Bet She Looks Like You*, *Uninvittlen*, *Swimming in Your Skin Again*, video installations including *18 Black Boys Ages 1-8 Who Have Arrived at the Singularity and are Thus Spiritual Machines: \$1 in an Edition of \$97 Quadrillion*, the feature film *An Oversimplification of Her Beauty* (2012), and the HBO television series *Random Acts of Flyness* (2018-2022). He is the founder of MVMT, a production company that creates films, series, and any form of moving images, a founding member of The Ummah Chroma Creative Partners, a directors collective and production company, and a founder of the film studio Lalibela Baltimore. In 2022, he came out with his debut album VORTEX, produced under the name Terence Etc. and released on Flying Lotus' Brainfeeder imprint. In 2023, *Swarm* was presented for the first time at the ICA Philadelphia, organized by Maori Karmael Holmes, Chief Executive and Artistic Officer of Black Star Projects.

About Nicola Vassell Gallery

Nicola Vassell Gallery is a contemporary art gallery committed to discourse that widens the lens of the history and future of art. Its focus is on developing an inter-generational, cross-disciplinary program of international artists and thinkers.