

## BmoreArt



### **Charles Mason III: *You Must Treat The Person(s) You Love With The Greatest Care* at Goya Contemporary**

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Words: Cara Ober, Michael Anthony Farley

In his second major solo exhibit with the gallery, Baltimore-based artist and educator Charles Mason III (B. 1990, Maryland), continues to merge a signature mixed media and text-based abstraction around identity politics and the “performative act of blackness” manifested through deliberate choices in materials.

Not quite sculpture, but also going beyond a traditional painting, Mason’s assemblages feel improvisational but also deliberate, where layers of canvas and torn and printed paper coalesce into an uneasy balance. Experimenting with materials is at the heart of Mason’s work, where expressionistic brushstrokes serve to unite these “sculpt-paintings” visually while snippets of scrawled writing hint at larger truths but also obfuscate meaning, leaving the viewer to puzzle it out.

According to the artist, he is “interested in creating spaces that allow for the audience’s own experiences of engagement with black identity.” Mason takes this narrative further by emphasizing the personal relationships most important to him, extracting gems from everyday lived experiences, and also considering loss and systemic violence toward Black Americans. The artist says: “Conditional love and endurance: what is required for someone’s life to be considered valuable? What does it take for someone to care for you or for you to care for someone and how do we endure this? I asked myself these questions when I moved back to Baltimore and started to think about the relationship I have with my father. I want to know him and build a new connection around who we are, now, and how we love each other. Examining our relationship became a springboard from where my practice has been situated these last few years; and it’s become one focused on labor, love, grief, poetics, and material.” (CO)