

# **Charles Mason III: *You Must Treat the Person(s) You Love with the Greatest Care***

**On view September 18 – November 16, 2023**

**Goya Contemporary Gallery**

**Curator: Amy Eva Raehse**

**Opening reception with the artist on Sept 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, from 4-7pm**

**For Immediate Release:** Goya Contemporary Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of artworks by Contemporary American artist Charles Mason III (B. 1990, Maryland), marking his second major solo exhibition with the gallery.

The Baltimore based artist and educator creates abstractions around identity politics and the “performative act of blackness” experienced and manifested through physical materials. Capturing the pulse of the city, and the beat of his own drum, Mason is “far more interested in creating spaces that allow for the audience’s own experiences of engagement with black identity.”

Of his work Mason 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.”

Indeed, Mason’s improvisational constructions or ‘sculpt-paintings’ are a non-traditional style that explores layers of personal expression through use of color, form, gesture, and texture, while remaining grounded in social realism. The artist’s work focuses on individual experiences, his relationships with family and friends, as well as loss, and the generational trauma experienced by black Americans because of systemic racism. Mason seeks to reveal the essence of emotion and self-expression through material culture. Working between media, fluidly moving from paint on canvas to works made on, or of torn, printed, and impressed upon paper; Mason’s constructions are more about experimentation with materials to achieve an emotional response than they are about constraining himself to a defined and limited media.

The art historical narrative of American Abstraction has been told with an inordinately white cast of characters, misrepresenting the authentic story of abstract practitioners. More recently, Black artists’ contributions to the amplification of contemporary figuration have been acknowledged, almost to the point of erroneously pigeonholing all POC’s into the category of figuration.

As the art historical field makes corrections, acknowledging the significance of black abstract and expressionist painters of the past such as Alma Thomas, Sam Gilliam, Jack Whitten, Howardena Pindell, Norman Lewis, and Ed Clark; we come to comprehend their influence on the contemporary practitioners of our day including-- among

countless others-- the work of David Hammons, Tomashi Jackson, Julie Mehretu, Glenn Ligon, Adam Pendleton, and Charles Mason III.

Where Mason certainly is aware of these artists and the influence they have on his practice, he has developed his own distinct vocabulary that engages a type of call and response between painting, printmaking, photo transfers, collage, performance, photographic appropriation, and life experience. Dragging material across the surface of his complicated matrices, Mason creates passionately charged works that convey an array of complex messages that we cannot effortlessly untangle, and that we certainly cannot easily forget.

Charles Mason III (b. 1990, Baltimore, MD) received his AA from the Community College of Baltimore County, 2010. After receiving his BFA in Graphic Design from the University of Maryland Baltimore County in 2014, he attended The New School, NEW York. In 2019 he received his MFA in Studio Art from Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

Distinguished SOLO exhibitions include Goya Contemporary Gallery, Baltimore, MD 2023; Anna Zorina Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, 2022; Goya Contemporary Gallery Baltimore, MD, 2021; and Spillway Collective, Philadelphia, PA, 2019. Notable group exhibitions include: The Culture: Hip Hop and Contemporary Art in the 21st Century, co-organized by the Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) and Saint Louis Art Museum (SLAM); Venus Over Manhattan, New York, NY; Asya Geisberg Gallery, New York, NY; The Radical Voice of Blackness Speaks of Resistance and Joy, Banneker-Douglass Museum, Annapolis, MD; Simone Subal Gallery, New York; HOUSING Gallery, New York, NY; Radical Reading Room, The Studio Museum in Harlem, Harlem, NY; Breaching the Margins, Urban Institute for Contemporary Art, Grand Rapids, MI; Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia, PA; CARPE DIEM, UTA Art Space, Beverly Hills, CA; and Surface is only a Material Vehicle for Spirit, Kavi Gupta Gallery, Chicago, IL.

Among inclusion in myriad private collections nationwide, Mason has work in the permanent collections of the Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD; the James E. Lewis Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; and the Hammer Museum Grunwald Center Collection, Los Angeles, CA, The Microsoft Art Collection, VA; The BUNKER Art Space, West Palm Beach, FL; among others.

A Trawick Prize winner, Mason is a visiting lecturer at several colleges and universities and has been invited to participate in various residencies. He speaks regularly about his studio practice, art in the context of popular culture, as well as on the importance of equity in the arts. The artist started the Two-Lane Stories Endowed Fund for Morgan State University Visual Art Students. **A portion of all sales through Goya Contemporary Gallery will be donated to the Two-Lane Stories Endowed Fund.**

Goya Contemporary is free and open to the public.  
Hours of operation: Tue – Fri, 10am – 6pm / Saturday, noon-4pm

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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**About Goya Contemporary:** Goya Contemporary Gallery promotes the art and culture of our time by presenting ideas through exhibitions, curatorial practice, catalogues, print publishing, artist representation, and collections. The gallery builds private & public collections, assist in acquisitions, and facilitates auction activity. Goya Contemporary has earned international acclaim for its thought-provoking exhibitions, innovative programming, and unique collaborations with artists. Known as one of the most prestigious and long running galleries in the mid-Atlantic, Goya is dedicated to scholarly programming, and promoting the work of mid-career artists both internationally and locally, and legacy planning and protection for artists.

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