

KOHN GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JONATHAN LYNDON CHASE: SHEETS



Man Lying in Garden Bed, 2016, acrylic on bed sheet, 72 x 72 inches
Photo: Studio LHOOQ

Opening Reception: Friday, June 1, 7-10pm

Los Angeles, California – Kohn Gallery is pleased to present *Sheets*, a solo exhibition of new work by Philadelphia-based artist Jonathan Lyndon Chase. This marks the artist's inaugural exhibition with the gallery, and will be his first solo presentation in Los Angeles. Through contorted figures and fractured compositions that float seamlessly between historical and contemporary styles and references, Chase portrays a form of self-expression that puts human touch at the forefront of his art. His powerful figurative paintings highlight the daily lives of black queer men and the difficulties faced by defining one's identity as such in contemporary society.

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Chase's engagement with the black figure is complicated and multifaceted. He is often fixated on the duality of emotions and experience. It is important that contrasts exist between the mood of his characters and their environment. This focus on depersonalization brings awareness to the experience of struggling to unite different components of gender identity and psychosocial adversity, especially within the black community.

Drawing from his everyday experiences, Chase examines the relationship between space and gender as social constructs; the ways in which gender identity is affected by our immediate environment and the dominant societal norms that exist within that space. For *Sheets*, Chase delves further into this idea of gender performativity, using spatial obscurity as a means of protecting his autobiographical subjects from the trappings of ethno-cultural stereotypes and societal expectations. Fragmented, multi-dimensional characters are placed within abstract and ambiguous backdrops, diminishing existing structures that forcefully define how conventionally masculine and feminine bodies are supposed to function in various settings— both indoor and outdoor, intimate and public.

Introducing personalized yet heavily contorted figures in more conventional, safe environments, Chase's figures are allowed to experiment with new forms of non-binary gender expression— coupling watches, track pants, and Nikes with hoop earrings, eyeshadow, and lipstick. His use of gendered items and symbolization, such as fashion and make-up, is rich in Ball Culture, an underground subculture that has thrived for generations as a haven for LGBTQ people of color, depicts the suppression and presentation of gender exploration within public and private spaces. As a minority within a minority, many of Chase's colors and cues are inspired by music and pop culture aesthetics common in the 90s-era black community in which he grew up.

Chase's practice is a hybrid one, ranging across painting, drawing, collage, and sculpture, often all within the same work. The current exhibition displays this interdisciplinary practice with a range of his multi-medium paintings and works on paper throughout the entirety of the gallery's exhibition spaces. These works contain a vast vernacular of expressionism and graphic style evocative of predecessors such as Egon Schiele; harnessing an exceptional degree of emotional and sexual directness and figural distortion in place of conventional beauty. Moreover, his deeply personal and striking approach to figuration incites references to the contorted male bodies of Francis Bacon, while their impossible curvature and ageless ambiguity is indicative of Greco-Roman sculpture. Yet with his raw, gestural aesthetic, Chase has developed a distinctive body of work that bridges the contemporary and the ancient, hinging on representation and abstraction.

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The title of the exhibition, *Sheets*, alludes to Chase's use of bedsheets as a base material, allowing viewers to literally and metaphorically share in his domestic spaces, which for Chase function as safe spaces. *Sheets* is a reference to where we begin our day and end it, an element of our day-to-day lives that allows us to unravel or disrobe the layers of multiple identity we maintain for the outside world in order to live.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Jonathan Lyndon Chase (b. 1989, Philadelphia, PA) lives and works in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Chase currently has work on display in *Reclamation! Pan-African Works from the Beth Rudin DeWoody Collection* at The Taubman Museum of Art, Roanoke, VA. Previously, his work has been included in exhibitions at the California African American Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2017); Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia, PA (2017); The Bunker, Collection of Beth Rudin DeWoody, Palm Beach, FL (2017); and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Art, Philadelphia, PA (2016). Chase's work resides in numerous private and public collections throughout the world, including the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA; The Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia, PA; The Hort Collection, NY; The Wedge Collection, Toronto, CA; and the Beth Rudin DeWoody Collection.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Since its establishment in 1985 by Michael Kohn, Kohn Gallery has presented historically significant exhibitions in Los Angeles alongside exciting contemporary artists, creating meaningful contexts to establish links to a greater art historical continuum. Kohn Gallery represents important West Coast artists with long careers and rich histories such as Joe Goode and Lita Albuquerque, works by Larry Bell, as well as the Estates of Bruce Conner, Wallace Berman, John Altoon and Charles Brittin. Kohn Gallery boasts an expanding roster of emerging and mid-career artists including Ori Gersht, Rosa Loy, Dennis Hollingsworth, Mark Ryden, Tom LaDuke and Troika. Visit kohngallery.com for the latest information on upcoming exhibitions.

Instagram: @KOHNGallery, #kohngallery #jonathanlyndonchase

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