

NINO MIER GALLERY



LOS ANGELES | BRUSSELS | NEW YORK | MARFA

CAMERON WELCH

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BIOGRAPHY

HOPE

CAMERON WELCH

b. 1990, Indianapolis, IN, US
Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY, US



Brooklyn-based artist Cameron Welch's sculptures and wall-mounted mosaic reliquary-like 'paintings' draw inspiration from antiquity and modern life, mythologies of his own, and the untold stories of the American black experience. Formed by grouted tiles and interspersed with quotidian ready-made like items from eclectic markets and objects culled from Brooklyn detritus, Welch intertwines, paints and assembles various materials to form the scenes of his epic narratives. Often depicting heroic or eccentric figures with whom he shares true and fabled kinship, the artist sheds light on unsung histories through myriad sensations set within the intricate topology of his works.

Welch transitioned into mosaic assemblage in part after wandering through the Ancient Greco-Roman wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Noting that people of African descent were often underrepresented or misrepresented regardless of being an intrinsic part of the ancient world, Welch reclaims these histories by creating monumental, lasting depictions with culturally representative motifs. His personal experiences of being biracial result in the driving force in his work of creating a more advanced and accurate contemporary archeology.

Cameron Welch (b. 1990, Indianapolis, IN, US; lives and works in Brooklyn, NY, US) graduated with an MFA from Columbia University, New York in 2016. His recent solo exhibitions include RUINS at Yossi Milo Gallery, New York (2022); Figurative Summer at Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco (2020); Monolith at Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles (2019); RETROGRADE at Rental Gallery, East Hampton (2018); Hide and Seek at yours, mine, and ours, New York (2017). His work is included in the collection of The Museum of Art at the Rhode Island School of Design. Welch lives and works in New York.



SAMPLE WORKS

**sample selection does not reflect current availability*



Black Bacchus, 2023, marble, glass, ceramic, stone, spray enamel, oil and acrylic on panel in walnut artist frame, 96 5/8 x 120 5/8 in, 245.4 x 306.4 cm, (CWE22.003)



Relics of Flight, 2023
Marble, glass, ceramic, stone, spray enamel, oil
and acrylic on panel in walnut artist frame
84 5/8 x 72 5/8 in
214.9 x 184.5 cm
(CWE22.007)



The Hero Within, 2023

Marble, glass, ceramic, stone, spray enamel,
oil and acrylic on panel in walnut artist frame

82 5/8 x 70 5/8 in

209.9 x 179.4 cm

(CWE22.006)



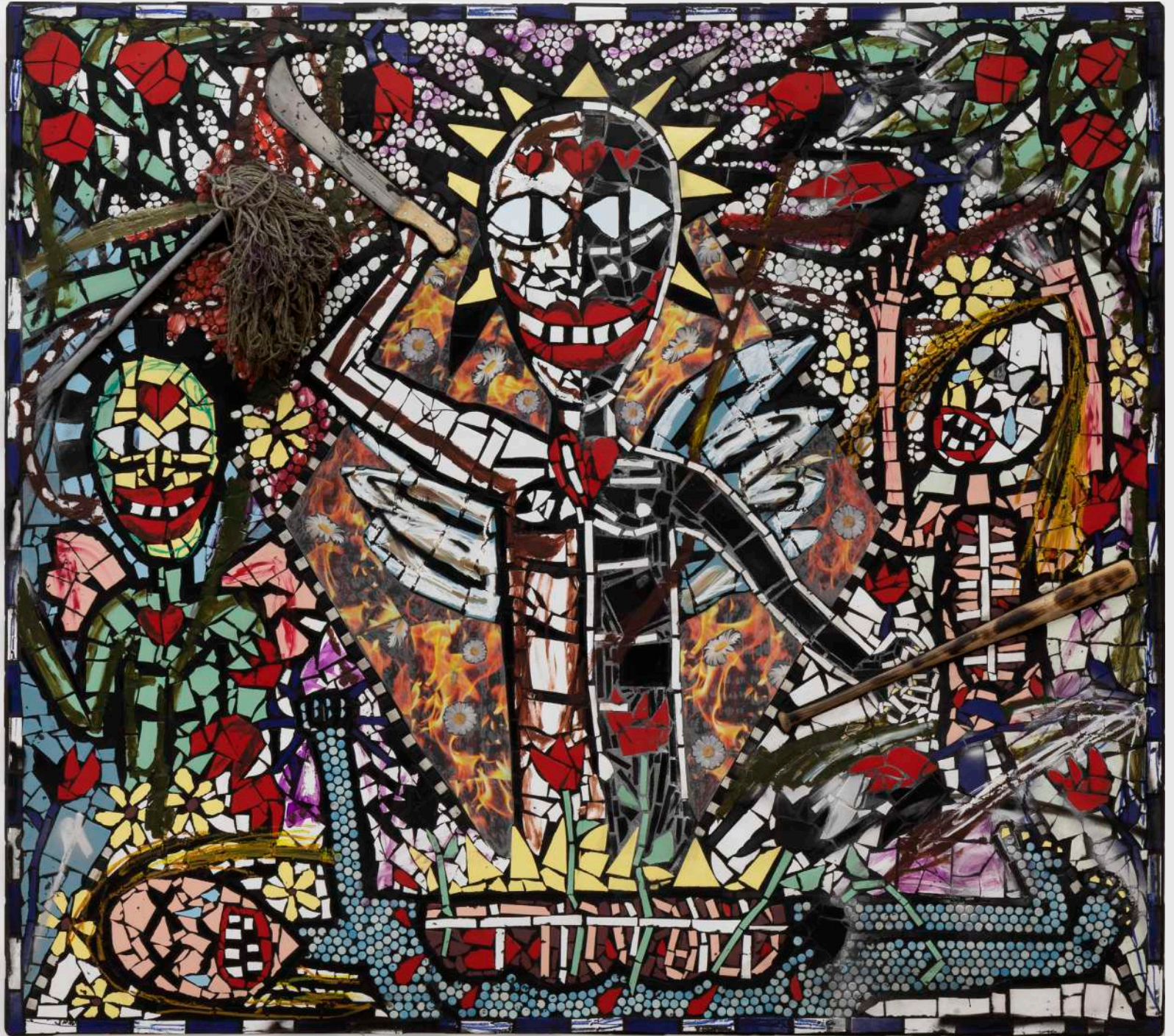


Drunk Skipper, 2022
Marble, glass, ceramic, stone, spray enamel,
oil, and acrylic on panel
60 x 48 in
152.4 x 121.9 cm
(CWE22.002)

The Fool, 2021, marble, glass, ceramic, quartz, stone, wood, spray enamel, oil, and acrylic on panel, 72 x 96 x 2 1/2 in, 182.9 x 243.8 x 6.3 cm, (CWE21.001)



Big Take Over, 2019
Oil, acrylic, spray,
collage, found objects,
and ceramic on panel
85 x 96 in
215.9 x 243.8 cm
(CWE19.003)







Joy Ride, 2019

Oil, acrylic, spray, collage, found objects, and ceramic on paper
78 x 68 in

198.1 x 172.7 cm
(CWE19.004)

Ex in Abs, 2018
Oil, acrylic, spray, collage,
found objects, and ceramic on panel
60 x 48 in
152.4 x 121.9 cm
(CWE19.014)







Out of Tune , 2019
Oil, acrylic, spray, collage, found objects,
and ceramic on panel
60 x 48 in
152.4 x 121.9 cm
(CWE19.009)

Warm Embrace, 2023
Marble, glass, ceramic, stone, spray enamel, oil and
acrylic on panel in walnut artist frame
60 x 48 in
152.4 x 121.9 cm
(CWE22.009)



A large, intricate mosaic artwork composed of numerous small tiles in various colors and shapes. The central focus is a large Yin-Yang symbol (Taijitu) rendered in black and white tiles. Surrounding this are various abstract and figurative elements, including a purple and yellow abstract shape at the top, a red triangle, and a cluster of purple grapes. The background is a mix of earthy tones like brown, tan, and grey, with some blue and white tiles scattered throughout. The overall composition is dense and visually rich.

**SELECTED EXHIBITONS
AND PROJECTS**

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS AND PROJECTS

REVELRY

2023

NINO MIER GALLERY
LOS ANGELES, CA, US

RUINS

2022

YOSSI MILO GALLERY
NEW YORK, NY, US

MONOLITH

2019

NINO MIER GALLERY
LOS ANGELES, CA, US

REVELRY

2023

NINO MIER GALLERY
LOS ANGELES, CA, US

Welch's second solo exhibition with the gallery, *REVELRY* will include a series of monumental mosaics recounting epic stories of contemporary American life laden with references to ancient mythology, art history, and his own identity.

Welch's expressive surfaces bring together narratives and iconographies culled from sources ranging from classical antiquity to modern pop culture and urbanism. His congested bricolages reflect the horror vacui of contemporary commodity culture. This "fear of the empty" expresses itself both in the panoply of materials Welch uses to craft his mosaics—marble, stone, glass, and tile, primarily—and in the resulting compositions.

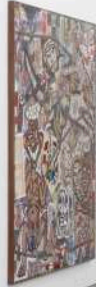
Welch also weaves representations of his own memories throughout the mosaics. *The Hero Within* (2023), for instance, is a self-portrait of his fraught experience growing up biracial in the Midwest. A grinning skeleton emerges from a central figure that's been bisected, as if cleaved in half top-down. One half of the figure has darker skin, while the other has lighter skin. To its left, a cartoonishly drunken devil holds

central figure's wrists, literalizing a moral and ethical battle between good and evil. Throughout the work, Welch presents references to *Edvard Munch's The Scream* (1893), lovers kissing behind windows, and angels falling. This playful mix of codes begets a more serious consideration of displaced peoples and histories.

With a masterful command of his medium, Welch builds surfaces that challenge viewers to reconsider who and what ought to be immortalized in marble and stone. Mosaic has been practiced globally since antiquity, yet Welch notes that its legacy in African art history and culture is often neglected by Western art institutions. Welch addresses this oversight—and the power dynamics which produce it—within his work. Many of Welch's figures are surrounded by gold glass hand-gilded by the artist in 24 karat gold leaf. Swaths of marble-printed porcelain are humorously scattered amid patterned backgrounds: Welch states that "where I'm from, all the marble was fake." Welch's material polyphony conjures the dizzying cacophony of intersecting semiotic systems and histories—what Welch refers to as a "black hole of nostalgia."

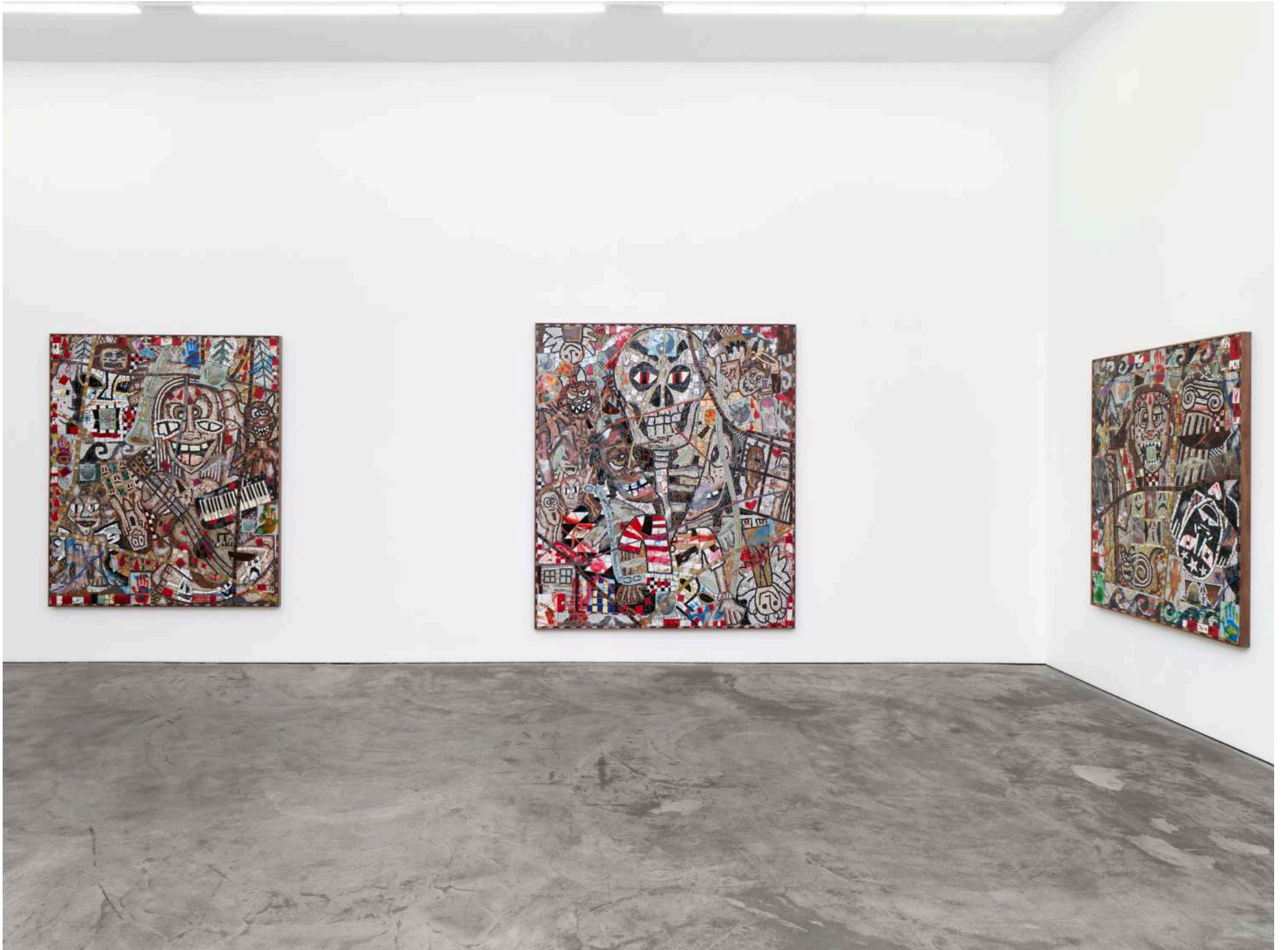


CAMERON WELCH
REVELRY



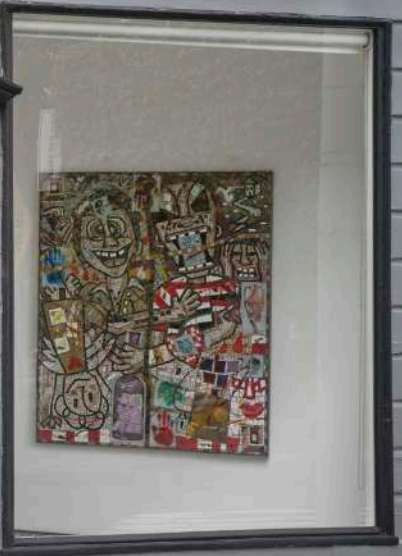






CAMERON WELCH
REVELRY

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RUINS

2022
YOSSI MILO GALLERY
NEW YORK, NY, US

Cameron Welch meticulously assembles hand-cut bits of marble, stone, glass, and tile to produce his monumental mosaics. His intricate compositions recount epic stories of contemporary life in America, laden with references to ancient mythology, art history, and his identity. Mosaic, the artist's medium of choice, allows each constituent piece to embody its own history while simultaneously contributing to the work's grander narrative.

Mosaic has been practiced globally since antiquity, yet its legacy in African art history and culture is often overlooked by western art institutions. Welch seeks to highlight and remedy this oversight with works such as *Fugue State* (2021). At eight feet high and twelve feet wide, the work is a massive feat in both scale and complexity. In content, it blends iconography from European Christianity, consumer culture, and

modern-day socio-political issues, making notable reference to Michelangelo's *Pietà*. At its center, a lifeless, Burberry-clad body is draped across the lap of a winged deity. Surrounding these figures is a frenzy of iconographic elements, including a Byzantine lamb, masks from the horror film *Scream*, an anti-cop protester, and a devil-artist dancing atop a Modigliani-like figure of his own creation. Gold-plated glass and marble-printed porcelain tiles are dispersed across the mosaic's surface, humorously referencing the fabricated surfaces of Welch's childhood home. This playful mix of codes begets a more serious consideration of displaced peoples and histories, or what the artist refers to as a "black hole of nostalgia." With a masterful command of his medium, Welch builds worlds that challenge viewers to reconsider who and what ought to be immortalized in marble and stone.















MONOLITH

2019
NINO MIER GALLERY
LOS ANGELES, CA, US

Drawing inspiration from both antiquity and modern life, Welch presents a series of sculptures and 'paintings': wall-mounted mosaic reliquaries depicting his own mythologies, specifically, untold stories of the American black experience. Formed by grouted tiles and interspersed with quotidian ready-mades like items from eclectic markets and objects culled from Brooklyn detritus, Welch intertwines, paints and assembles various materials to form the scenes of his epic narratives. Often depicting heroic or quirky figures with whom he shares a kinship, or surrogates for himself, the artist sheds light on unsung histories through complex myriad of sensations set within the intricate topology of his works.

Previously working in collage and textiles, Welch transitioned into mosaic assemblage in part after wandering through the Ancient Greco-Roman wing at the Metropolitan Museum. Noting that people of African descent were often underrepresented regardless of being an intrinsic part of the ancient world, Welch reclaims this history by creating monumental, lasting depictions with culturally representative motifs. Drawing from his own personal experiences, especially being bi-racial, the artist formed his practice around an effort to advance a more contemporary archeology. Repurposing Greco-Roman characters, like in *Black Cupid*, the usually cherubic white child is now fashioned with black tiling, shooting an arrow towards a blonde Venus with a bursting heart and his name tattooed across her arm. In *Monolith*, Welch proclaims himself as a modern-day Hermes, who in addition to being known for his playful trickery, is the god of trade routes, and thusly, someone who connects diverse people together.

Welch's use of materials also suggests one of his major inspirations: his adopted home of Brooklyn and New York City. Like Welch's work, the city is a clash of a multitudes – a collision perfectly encapsulated by the artist's work. By his own description, his local Crown Heights corner store sells everything from cat food to machetes, a myriad of objects that often make their way into his painting. Notwithstanding the grand scale and splendor of Welch's work, his aesthetic retains a familiarity of improvised urban art, like homemade mosaics wrapped around street lamps, jagged shards of colored glass atop walls, or paths of a community gardens decorated with bottle caps. The tile he uses, small circles in honeycomb and simple white and black rectangles, also recalls the New York City subway halls – and like the underground cityscape, vary from perfectly aligned and gleaming, to smashed, sullied and covered in scrawls. He also brings in bits of mirror and glass, where the viewer is flashed glimpses of light, as if catching oneself in reflection of a glass storefront or the glint from a skyscraper.













SELECTED PRESS

SELECTED PRESS

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JULY 2023

BY AMAYA MCDONALD

NEW YORK TIMES

JANUARY 2023

BY ROBERTA SMITH

SURFACE

APRIL 2022

BY RYAN WADDOUPS

HYPERALLERGIC

MARCH 2022

BY CASSIE PACKARD

ELLE DECOR

MARCH 2022

BY DORCIA KELLEY AND CHARLES CURKIN

ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

MAY 2021

BY HANNAH MARTIN

HYPEBEAST

APRIL 2019

BY ERIC BRAIN

VICE

MAY 2018

BY ANTWAUN SARGENT

VICE

MAY 2017

BY ANTWAUN SARGENT

CULTURED

MAGAZINE

JULY 2023

Look Inside the Studios of Three Artists Who've Been Shaped by the East End

Meet three artists whose work and careers have been informed by the East End: Charles Ly, Almond Zigmund, and Cameron Welch.

By Amaya McDonald



Portrait of Cameron Welch by Shark Senesac.

Cameron Welch remembers the first time he saw a painting by a person of color. Born in Indianapolis, Welch made many trips to the city's Museum of Art (now Newfields) as a child, but it wasn't until his teenage years that he saw a newly acquired work there titled *Don't Matter How Raggy the Flag, It Still Got to Tie Us Together* by the Black self-taught assemblage artist Thornton Dial. It was only then, Welch says, that "I had seen myself in an artwork, in any sense of the phrase."

Dial's formative influence on Welch remains evident. Based in Brooklyn, Welch, 32, is recognized for his assemblages that marry mythology with the mundane by incorporating found objects like mirrors, CDs, and MIDI keyboards. Throughout his training—first at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he received a BFA in 2013, and later at New York's Columbia University, where he earned an MFA in 2016—Welch foregrounded underrepresented Black histories and experiences in his paintings by using commonly found objects.



Photography by Shark Senesac.

His 2018 solo show, “Retrograde” at Rental Gallery in East Hampton, proved pivotal in his practice. Through 10 large-scale mixed-media paintings, Welch reimagined well-known characters from Western folklore and classical literature as people of color. His use of mosaic, a medium often associated with the Roman Empire, is intentionally referential. “[I thought] it would be a really great way to pose new mythologies or new narratives around Blackness,” he says. The exhibition presented him with an opportunity to investigate racial identity through the lens of mythmaking on a large scale, and “having that dialogue take place in what is a predominantly white space provided a really generative conversation around the work.”

Welch continues to create pieces he calls new myths—untold stories of the present that may one day inform the future. Much of his recent work doubles down on his dialogue with the past by incorporating marble. Nonetheless, an optimism for the future shines through the hard stone, showing how people of color “should and could be depicted in a historical sense.”

The New York Times

JANUARY 2023

Art We Saw This Spring

From our critics, reviews of closed gallery shows around New York City.

By Roberta Smith



Cameron Welch's "Fugue State" (2021), marble, glass, ceramic, stone, spray enamel, oil and acrylic on three panels. Credit...Cameron Welch and Yossi Milo Gallery

Cameron Welch's solo show, "Ruins," at Yossi Milo is a knockout — in almost the physical sense. It is full of large, ambitious, brilliantly executed mosaics full of so many disparate cultural references, snarling faces and masks and intimations of violence that it can initially be hard to focus.

Such artistic confidence and artisanal finesse can feel like Neo-Expressionism all over again and is especially reminiscent of the art of Jean-Michel Basquiat, although Basquiat had a finer appreciation of empty space and breathing room. Welch seems guided by an unwavering horror vacui. His mosaics carom from the Greco-Roman-African worlds to our own uneasy time, with many stops in between.

At the center of his mosaic "Fugue State," is a Pietà, with some role reversal: A woman in a Burberry plaid shroud lies across the lap of a probably male figure, perhaps Christ enthroned. To the left, a cherub and the Lamb of God. To the right, a prone female nude out of Modigliani, a devil wielding a brush and palette and a protester holding an anti-police sign who resembles Jordan Wolfson's demonic animatronic puppet, ambiguously titled "Colored Sculpture."

Welch, who is 31, was making painting-collages before taking up mosaic four or five years ago. He has improved rapidly, enriching and updating his medium with pieces of marble, stone and several kinds of reverse glass imagery (abstract painting, photographs of ancient pottery, his handprints). To say that he might have discovered his artistic destiny is putting it mildly.

SURFACE

APRIL 2022

Artist Statement: A Fantastically Frenzied Mosaic of Nostalgia, Faith, and Tragedy

A highlight of Cameron Welch's latest solo outing, the monumental "Fugue State" collages Renaissance masterworks with pop culture to recount epic stories about the ups and downs of contemporary American life.

By Ryan Waddoups



Photo courtesy of Yossi Milo Gallery

Here, we ask an artist to frame the essential details behind one of their latest works.

Bio: Cameron Welch, 31, Brooklyn (@welch_cameron)

Title of work: Fugue State.

Where to see it: Yossi Milo Gallery (245 10th Avenue, New York) until May 7.

Three words to describe it: Collision of contexts.

What was on your mind at the time: I'm interested in employing gestalt as a means of interrogating notions

of identity with a great weight given to process and material significance. Each work is littered with a myriad of characters populating fantastically frenzied scenes assembled with thousands of hand-cut, inlaid pieces of marble, ceramic, and glass.

An interesting feature that's not immediately noticeable: The central figure is a reference to Michelangelo's Pieta. Here, the deity is wrapped in a garb of Burberry made of various colors of marble and glazed ceramic. The gold pieces surrounding the figure are hand-gilded in the studio with 24 karat gold leaf.

How it reflects your practice as a whole: Most of my work is wholly invested in the practice of mosaic making. The works are often laden with culturally significant materials.

One song that captures its essence: "Into the Void" by Black Sabbath.

HYPERALLERGIC

MARCH 2022

Your Concise New York Art Guide for April 2022

Your list of must-see, fun, insightful, and very New York art events this month, including Morgan Bassichis, Kazuko Miyamoto, Frida Orupabo, and more.

By Cassie Packard



Cameron Welch, "Gravity Chasm" (2022), marble, glass, ceramic, stone, spray enamel, oil, and acrylic on panel, 120 x 288 inches (courtesy the artist and Yossi Milo Gallery)

This month, bodies are everywhere — even when they're not. Exhibitions across New York City delicately dissect the omnipresence of the body in abstract and virtual space, address corporeality's constructed or collaged nature, explore the political potential of bodies in dialogue, and revel in the sheer absurdity of moving through the world in one of these things. Take care out there and enjoy.

Cameron Welch: *RUINS*

In historically scaled mosaics made from marble, stone, glass, paint, found objects, and tile (some of which is cheekily printed to mimic marble), Brooklyn-based artist Cameron Welch brings a contemporary collage- or graffiti-style aesthetic to an ancient art form that has similarly prized flat, graphic imagery at many points in its history. These monumental mosaics are densely packed with a temporally and thematically diffuse iconography of cartoonish figures — ranging from a cross-eyed cowboy to an anti-police protester to a Modigliani-style nude — along with animals, handprints, ceramic pots, skulls, blood, and masstige clothing.

THE DECOR

MARCH 2022

ARTISTS ARE DESIGNING HOME PRODUCTS LIKE NEVER BEFORE. HERE ARE THE BEST NEW OFFERINGS

Jack Shainman Gallery director Joeonna Bellorado-Samuels and designer Leyden Lewis offer their takes on avant-garde home products.

By Dorcia Kelley and Charles Curkin



Joshua Olley

There's always been a very thin line between art and design. At the very least, they tend to work hand in glove with each other, but we all know it's much more than that. Pithy dicta like "form follows function" and "less is more" satisfy on paper, but aesthetics and novelty just generally tend to be more exciting. That's why the most forward-thinking home brands, more and more, are working with fine artists to create new products that appeal to our collective yen for expressiveness and beauty. Here, Jack Shainman Gallery director Joeonna Bellorado-Samuels and interior designer Leyden Lewis give their perspectives on the 10 most striking examples.

RELICS STOOL BY CAMERON WELCH

LL: The humor and joyfulness of this piece come from an unexpected mixture of materials.

JBS: I love how Welch strikes that difficult balance between freneticism and symmetry.

16.5" dia. x 18" h.

AD

MAY 2021

This Brooklyn Artist is Bringing Mosaic Techniques to Modern Furniture

Design studio Konekt taps artist Cameron Welch for a striking new collaboration

By Hannah Martin



Joshua Olley

“They feel like something from an urban archaeological site,” says artist Cameron Welch of Relics, the new collection of mosaic-clad stools he created in collaboration with the design studio Konekt. “There’s something mythological about them, like they’ve had a life before you saw them.” Growing up in Indianapolis, Welch (now Brooklyn-based) was introduced to mosaic making by his grandmother, with whom he combined rocks, glass, ceramic, and concrete into an elaborate fireplace surround, among other household surfaces. Ever since, Welch has used this age-old medium to piece together thoughts about identity and cultural history, often in large-scale panels and sculptures. With this latest collaboration—an update to Konekt’s Thing stools—he brings those ideas back to a domestic context. “I thought of the materials you often see in contemporary furniture and jumbled them up to create something new,” says Welch, who inlaid cowhide with glass, ceramic, and porcelain that was printed to resemble marble, all lightly showered in spray paint and skirted in horsehair. “Each time you look at one you see something different,” says Helena Sultan, who runs Konekt with her daughter Natasha. “He made these inanimate objects come alive.” konektfurniture.com

HYPEBEAST

APRIL 2019

Cameron Welch Exhibits Mythological Mosaics at One River Art & Design School New York

The young artist will also receive a \$5000 USD grant.

By Eric Brain



Photo courtesy of Cameron Welch

Emerging mixed-medium artist Cameron Welch will be showcasing his mosaic-styled collages at One River Art and Design School's first-ever exhibition under its Emerging Art Award program.

His work, which references mythology, black identity and modern society, is made from discarded everyday items such as CDs, brooms and mirrors, which are combined with a mixture of mediums. Welch has previously made works from dumpster diving in New York, yet now sees his work exhibit upon the eve of the Frieze New York Art Fair.

Welch, an Indianapolis native, will receive also \$5000 USD grant from the art school. Speaking on the award, Welch said "I'm incredibly honored to receive this award... The prospect of enriching the lives of young people by connecting them to contemporary art is an invaluable one. I believe One River School accomplishes just that. I am beyond thrilled to be collaborating with such an impactful organization."

Showcasing new works as well as pieces from Welch's "MONOLITH" exhibition at the Nino Mier Gallery in Los Angeles — where he is currently exhibiting — One River's Emerging Art Award program will show the works from April 30 to May 2.

VICE

MAY 2018

This Dumpster Diving Artist Makes Beautiful Mosaics Out of Trash

He's putting blackness back into classic mythology.

By Antwaun Sargent



CAMERON WELCH, *NARCISSUS*, 2018. ALL IMAGES COURTESY THE ARTIST

The first time 27-year-old artist Cameron Welch dove into a dumpster in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, he was thinking about how the ancient relics and mythology celebrated by modern society largely exclude black identity. Sifting through the trash, he found artifacts of the recent past: CDs, brooms, mirrors, statues of black angels, and an Aboriginal Djembe drum.

“All the things I find have histories to them. They are references to time and identity. You go to the Met and you don’t see people of color,” he told VICE. “What do you do when you want to pose a new paradigm in representation? People always look back to look forward but stop at like 1950, and I’m like, ‘Why can’t we look back to Greece and ancient craft making?’”

Welch’s recently opened exhibition *Retrograde* at Rental Gallery incorporates objects the artist found while dumpster diving, but reinterprets them as a cross between painting and mosaic. It’s classical art making with a twist—instead of ancient ceramic fragments, Welch uses smashed pieces of colorful bathroom and subway tiles.

VICE caught up with Welch recently to talk about nostalgia, vandalism, embedding his personal identity in art history, and why modern culture needs new myths.

VICE: What inspired you to start using mosaics in your paintings?

Cameron Welch: I was thinking a lot about what could be a new myth and trying to create a new world where people of color get to be represented in this way. So I thought about mashing ancient myths around beauty, sexuality, and identity with more modern signifiers. There are CDs—which are like fossils in the world now because we don't use them anymore. I was interested in the stories they evoke for people. Or you have a keyboard in Jazz that someone played and then threw out, and I wanted those histories embedded in the work. The mythology doesn't really stop at the depiction of the thing by me but takes on different things with the different people who see the paintings.

How did dumpster diving make you more interested in using black figures in your work?

I always rely on the readymade. There's something about the tactility of an object that's lived within an image. I was trying to combat institutional painting, a very white history of painting, and surround it with a story of blackness. Now I am creating a [more direct] new narrative. I can pose different questions while bringing in all of these things from the outside world. I'm now thinking about actual objects.

How does embedding the actual objects rethink ideas of race presently and in the past?

The entire body of work is about the intimacy of self recognition. The use of mirrors for every figure's eyes makes you address your own relationship within the proposed narrative and past narratives. Like *Lover Boy* is about romance—it's the idea of a Romeo, or the ancient romantic—and we have a black figure holding a bouquet of flowers in the mirror, and it's more about you seeing yourself as this person.

I create mosaics because there's something kind of cozy about them that's inviting and beautiful and asks, "Where are you within this story? What do you see when you literally see yourself reflected in this thing?"



L: THE ARTIST AT WORK. PHOTO BY CORINNE RENDINARO. R: OUTWARD BOUND. OIL, ACRYLIC, SPRAY, COLLAGE, FOUND OBJECTS, AND CERAMIC ON PANEL. 48 X 36 INCHES. 2018

Persephone is the only depiction of a white figure in the show. What are you trying to advance with that around the myths of identity?

It's interesting because I'm mixed, and I've used my work to navigate my own identity. It's funny, too, because that figure is exactly the same as the black figure in most of the other paintings. I wanted to see what it'd be like when just one of the figures in the entire show was white. It's all about that same question I was posing: what happens to a viewer when they are forced to see themselves in a narrative? The white figure is sort of a bait and switch even though they are all painted the same way; all of the characteristics of their faces are the same, but one is white. What happens? I'm posing more questions than answers.

One of the other things you do, that brings the street into the mostly lily-white tradition of history painting, is use graffiti on the mosaics, which alludes to tagging. Do you think of your paintings as a form of vandalism?

It is vandalism as a means of establishing a new history. I am literally rewriting old histories by writing on top of them. I think there's something really radical about that reclaiming of space. The mark making in my work references the potential of reversing power structures.

Why do we need new myths?

I think it's all about possibility. I think I've always tried to find balance in the sort of binaries of my own self-identification. In terms of gender, race, and politics, I think we have gotten to this point where we see fluidity in a lot of the socio-political realms in society that has bubbled up to the surface. I have a younger brother, for example, and a lot of his friends don't identify as one thing or another. They actually hate the idea of being forced to identify as one thing. I think that's a beautiful idea that's often talked about in this really grandiose, utopian way.

And with bringing people of color into the representative sphere of mosaic making or history painting, I'm starting to talk about that. The paintings are proposing the idea of getting rid of a lot of these boundaries. I'm putting black figures in romantic spheres to do away with the construct that people of color can't be represented in that way. I'm an artist that doesn't want to be bound, materially speaking, to one mode of representation. I think it's all about pushing a new myth of liberated existence in terms of self-identification but also knowledge and narrative. I think it's all about being free.



CAMERON WELCH, *PERSEPHONE*. OIL, ACRYLIC, SPRAY, COLLAGE, FOUND OBJECTS, AND CERAMIC ON PANEL. 60 X 48 INCHES. 2018



MAY 2017

90s Nostalgia and Racial Politics Collide in Multidimensional Mosaics

Cameron Welch's newest works combine Aaliyah, children's toys,
and Greek mythology.

By Antwaun Sargent



CAMERON WELCH, *I SEE YOU (BEWARE OF DOG)*, 87 X 88 INCHES, OIL, ACRYLIC, SPRAY PAINT, OIL STICK, GRAPHITE, DIGITAL DYE PRINT, FOUND FABRIC, AND ENAMEL ON HANDMADE FENCE, 2017.

In the 1990s, the toymaker Little Tikes released an advertisement for a double sided children's art easel. In the ad, a little black girl and little white boy are pictured painting. The little boy is holding a paint brush, finishing off a watercolor landscape, while the little girl is erasing whatever she made. The image's vantage point doesn't allow the would-be customer to see what art the girl has made. For the painter Cameron Welch, this multicultural anodyne scene speaks volumes about the ways identity is shaped, even in moments perceived as innocent. And it inspired *I see you (beware of dog)*, one of three large-scale mixed-media paintings mounted on handmade mosaics featured in his first solo exhibition, *Hide and Seek*, at yours mine & our gallery.

"*I see you (beware of dog)* addresses [race] under the umbrella of domesticity and innocence," Welch tells *Creators*. "It talks about gender, race, privilege, and the performance of those issues all in a nostalgic package that most people can relate to." Behind four images of the vintage ad, marked and distorted by the artist, is a coloring book scene of Cerberus, the three headed dog, who in Greek mythology guards Hades, the chthonic god of the underworld. The entire painting hangs on a white picket fence, which Welch made. "What are we actually seeing? Who has access to certain information, and who doesn't? There's also something mischievous about the whole thing," he says.

The exhibition also features the painting *Black Beauty*. The work, like the others in the show, indirectly recalls the 20th century Italian movement of *Arte Povera* by using common materials—fabric, coloring books, crayon, spray paint, advertisements, and markers of mythology—to explore high and low art encountered in the everyday. *Black Beauty* features images of a flower set ablaze imposed on an unfinished coloring book picture of Pegasus, the white winged stallion of Greek mythology. The scene is mounted on top of a bed of multicolored mosaic roses, which evoke both traditional collage and craft making practices. The multi-layered, messy scene of competing ideas shows Pegasus, a symbol frequently deployed in Renaissance painting and an ancient sign of wisdom, on a canvas with a flower on fire, a symbol of passionate anger. The feelings expressed in the painting, as roundabout as they are, seem like a perfect assessment of current racial politics.

“For *Eurydice* utilizes an iconic image of Aaliyah, which speaks specifically to so many people but also reflects the whole 90s revival thing that’s going on,” says the artist. The singer is paired with an image of Orpheus, whose story is timeworn but romantic. The whole painting rests on a panel covered in hand-cut CDs made into a mosaic. “Everything is playing with and against each other thing. The CD being this sort of dated relic of my childhood and the process of making a mosaic reinforcing the Ancient Greek imagery in the painting. The metaphor of the mosaic is kind of poetic, using broken disparate pieces to create something beautiful,” he says.

“The work in the show is really nostalgic,” says Welch. The signifiers in the paintings point to various moments in time, each dealing with a major theme which is anchored by the Greek mythological figures depicted in the narrative works. “I spent a lot of time trying to figure out how to make the work really loud. Paintings of mine, in the past, have always dealt with identity to some degree, but I feel that this show in particular starts to illustrate that conversation a little more flagrantly,” he says, reflecting on his inclusion of figures in a painting practice that previously excluded them. “I realized that I could draw from images as a means to really direct the conversation in the work and create a more nuanced narrative. There’s something really potent about being an artist of color and colliding these ancient images with others that start to talk about race.”



CAMERON WELCH, *FOR EURYDICE*, 84 X 78 INCHES, OIL, ACRYLIC, SPRAY PAINT, OIL STICK, DIGITAL DYE PRINT, CDS, AND FOUND FABRIC ON WOOD PANEL 2017. ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND YOURS MINE & OURS.



CURRICULUM VITAE

CAMERON WELCH

b. 1990, Indianapolis, IN, US
Lives and works in New York, NY, US

EDUCATION

2016 MFA, Columbia University, New York, NY, US
2013 BFA, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, US

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2023 *Revelry*, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US
2022 *RUINS*, Yossi Milo Gallery, New York, NY, US
2020 *Heavier Than Heaven*, Rental Gallery, New York, NY, US
Figurative Summer, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco, CA, US (online)
2019 *Monolith*, Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles, CA, US
2018 *RETROGRADE*, Rental Gallery, East Hampton, NY, US
2017 *Hide and Seek*, yours, mine, and ours, New York, NY, US

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2022 *GAGOSIAN X DEITCH PRESENT: 100 YEARS*, Miami Design District, Miami, FL, US
2021 *Abstraction & Social Critique*, Kavi Gupta, Chicago, IL, US
36 Paintings, Harper's Books, East Hampton, NY, US
Balloons Dropping from a Ceiling Fan, Left Field Gallery, Los Osos, CA, US
Natural Materials, Jenkin Johnson Gallery, San Francisco, CA, US
2020 *A little bit country, a little bit rock n' roll*, Arts of Life, Glenview, IL, US
Winter Salon, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco, CA, US
Tell Me Your Story, Kunsthall, KAdE Museum, Amersfoort, NL
Figurative Summer, Jenkins Johnson Gallery, San Francisco, CA, US
2019 *Horology*, Jack Hanley Gallery, New York, NY, US
Then and Now, Jenkins Johnson Projects, Brooklyn, NY, US
Kadosh, Denny Dimin Gallery, New York, NY, US
I'm Made of Water, Rental Gallery, East Hampton, NY, US
Malmo Sessions, Carl Kostyal. Malmo, SE
By Our Own Hands, Camayuhs Gallery, Atlanta, GA, US
2018 *Reunion Tour*, Andrew Rafacz, Chicago, IL
Love 2018: Purple Hearts, LeRoy Neiman Gallery, New York, NY

- 2017 *Shed*, Christies Summer Preview, Red Hook, NY
Mother's House, yours, mine, and ours, New York, NY
Stakes 2, Cloud City, Brooklyn, NY
Cats Without Claws, Mom's Gallery, New York, NY
Microcosm, Roberts and Tilton, Los Angeles, CA
- 2016 *Finished Goods Warehouse*, Pfizer Warehouse, Brooklyn, NY, US
Theaster Gates: How to Build a House Museum, Art Gallery of Ontario, Ontario, CA
Columbia University MFA Thesis Show, Fisher Landau Center for the Arts,
 New York, NY, US
75th/150th Joint Anniversary Exhibition, South Side Community Arts Center,
 Chicago, IL, US
- 2015 *Columbia University MFA First Year Exhibition*, Miriam & Ira D. Wallach Art
 Gallery, New York, NY, US
- 2014 *Private Eyes. Gray Sunsets*, Circuit 12 Contemporary, Dallas, TX, US
Game Genie, Trestle Projects, Brooklyn, NY, US
- 2013 *The Politics of Seeing*, BFA Exhibition, Sullivan Galleries, Chicago, IL, US
Marvelous Freedom. Vigilance of Desire, Revisited, Arcade Gallery,
 Chicago, IL, US
- 2012 *Mythologies*, Sullivan Galleries, Chicago, IL, US
Take Away, Student Union Galleries, Chicago, IL, US
Act II: Fiction Brings it Closer, Student Union Galleries, Chicago, IL, US
- 2010 *Old and New*, Harrison Galleries, Indianapolis, IN, US
- 2007 *What's Your Sign*, Indianapolis Art Center, Indianapolis, IN, US

AWARDS & HONORS

Rema Hort Mann Foundation Emerging Artist's Grant Nominee
 Columbia University TA Fellowship
 Columbia University Visual Arts Scholarship
 SAIC Distinguished Scholarship of Merit
 The Elizabeth C. Nolan Shortridge PTA Scholarship
 The Links INC. Art Scholarship

COLLECTIONS

The Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

2022 Smith, Roberta. "What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries Right Now" The New York Times 21

April 2022

Waddoups, Ryan. "A Fantastically Frenzied Mosaic of Nostalgia, Faith, and Tragedy"
Surface Magazine 14 April, 2022

Packard, Cassie. "Your Concise New York Art Guide for April 2022" Hyperallergic 29
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- 2021 Martin, Hannah. "This Brooklyn Artist is Bringing Mosaic Techniques to Modern
Furniture." Architectural Digest 26 May 2021.
"New Talent Issue." Art in America May 2021.
- 2019 Brian, Eric. "Cameron Welch Exhibits Mythological Mosaics at One River Art and Design
School New York." HYPEBEAST 30 April 2019.
Scott, Chadd. "Phillips Capitalizing On Surging African-American Market With Latest
Selling Exhibition." Forbes 10 January 2019.
- 2018 Sargent, Antwuan. "This Dumpster Diving Artist Makes Beautiful Mosaic Out of Trash."
VICE 10 May 2018.
- 2016 Sargent, Antwuan. "Facebook Photos and Collages Converge in Portraits of Digital
Lives." VICE 21 June 2016.
- 2014 Sargent, Antwuan. "Post-Black Art in the Age of Hip-Hop." VICE 12 December 2014.
Sargent, Antwuan. "Black Lives Matter – Should Black Artists Respond To The
Movement?" The Aethete
- 2013 Wallis, Tanisha. "Contemporary Aesthetics Meet Traditional Stereotypes." Reviewing
The Arts 4 February 2013
- 2012 Orendorff, Danny. "Exhibition Review: 'Mythologies' at SAIC's Sullivan Galleries." Bad at
Sports 14 December 2012



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