

DOMINIC CHAMBERS
Soft Shadows
New York, 24th Street
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Dominic Chambers in his New Haven, Connecticut studio, 2022.

PRESS CONTACTS

Sarah Levine
Global Director of Marketing & Communications
slevine@lehmannmaupin.com

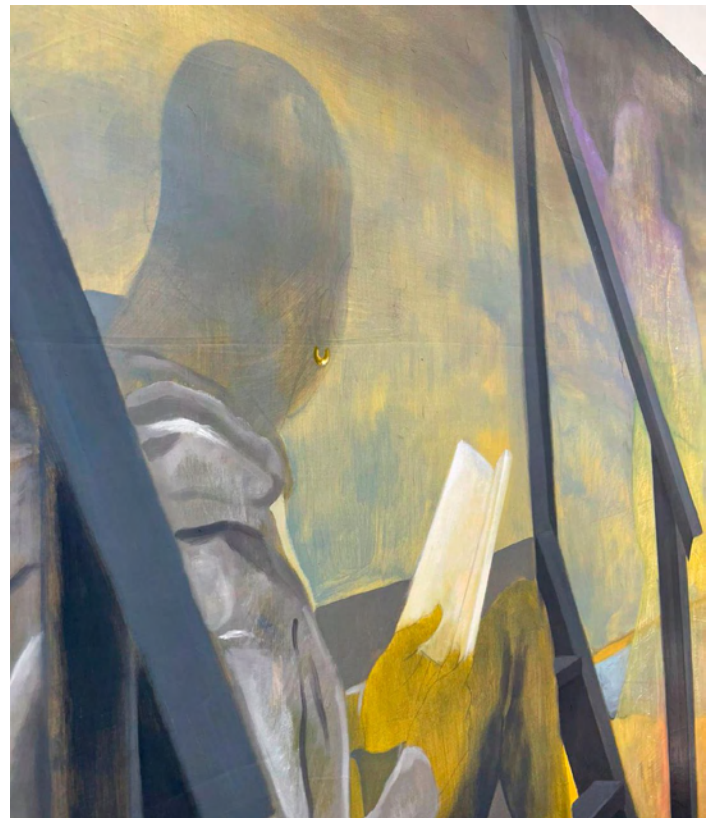
Alejandro Jassan
Associate Director of Press Relations
alejandro@lehmannmaupin.com

Allison Thorpe
Sutton Communications
allison@suttoncomms.com

Lehmann Maupin announces *Soft Shadows*, a focused presentation of new work by artist Dominic Chambers. Born in St. Louis, MO (1993) and currently based in New Haven, CT, Chambers creates vibrant paintings that deftly combine an exploration of the modes, conventions, and traditional themes of art history with contemporary concerns around race and identity. The artist's most recent bodies of work feature images of friends, family members, and acquaintances engaged in acts of leisure and contemplation, set in vividly colored environments that border on the ethereal. A writer as well as an artist, Chambers draws inspiration as much from art historical models as from literature—particularly Magical Realism and the writing of W.E.B. Du Bois. Many of his compositions incorporate Fabulist elements, including ghostly silhouettes meant to be stand-ins for the artist, and lush, surreal landscapes that feel at once familiar yet uncanny. Comprised of the artist's newest paintings, *Soft Shadows* marks Lehmann Maupin's first exhibition with Chambers, who joined the gallery's program in 2021.

Fundamentally interested in how art can function as a mechanism for understanding, recontextualizing, or renegotiating one's relationship to the world, Chambers sees painting as a critical and intellectual endeavor as much as an aesthetic one. Recent series have focused on representations of Black leisure, with Chambers depicting many of his subjects reading or lost in thought, their gaze fixed far outside the frame. "Too often, the Black body has been located in our imaginations as one incapable of rest," Chambers explains, "often when we imagine what the Black body is doing it is usually an act of labor, rebellion, or resistance." In series like *After Albers* and *Primary Magic*, Chambers seeks to remove these associations, portraying his figures in moments of reflection or reverie, meditative and serene. Color, and especially our physical experience of it, also plays a crucial role in Chambers' work. The artist has described color as a protagonist in his paintings that is as critical to understanding their meaning as their subject matter. With an eye to the *Unione* mode of the High Renaissance, Chambers strives to create harmony and balance throughout his compositions while retaining enough tension and interplay between contrasting colors to give each painting a subtle charge.

Best known for his highly saturated canvases imbued with rich tones of blue, green, red, and yellow, *Soft Shadows* evinces a subtle shift in Chambers' work. Pulling from personal and imagined narratives, the artist depicts a myriad of activities—from engagement with books to dancing with one's own shadow—rendered in tones of black, white, and grey, set against bright washes of color or punctuated by strategic glimmers of prismatic light. Part of his recent *Shadow Work* series, in these paintings Chambers considers ways in which light and shadow are negotiated both formally and conceptually. Throughout the series he makes overt reference to iconic paintings from across art history, reinvigorating and reinterpreting some of its most famous images with particular attention to the racialized connotations of illumination. Taken together, the *Shadow Work* paintings represent the most recent development in the artist's profound interest in the interrogation of art history and his rigorous exploration of color theory and its relationship to race.



Detail of a Dominic Chambers painting from his *Soft Shadows* series, 2022.

Dominic Chambers (b. 1993 St. Louis, MO; lives and works in New Haven, CT) received his B.F.A from Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, Milwaukee, WI in 2016, and his M.F.A. from Yale University School of Art, New Haven, CT in 2019. Solo exhibitions of his work have been organized at The August Wilson African American Cultural Center, Pittsburgh, PA (2020); Luce Gallery, Turin, Italy (2020); The Millitzer Studio and Gallery, St. Louis, MO (2017); and the Residential Gallery, Des Moines, IA (2017). Select group exhibitions featuring his work include *Black Bodies, White Spaces: Invisibility & Hypervisibility*, Green Family Foundation, Dallas, TX (2021); *Realms of Refuge*, Kavi Gupta, Chicago, IL (2021); *Art Finds a Way*, Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL (2020); *Synchronicity*, Roberts Projects, Los Angeles, CA (2020); *Abstractions of Black Citizenship: African American Art from Saint Louis*, Hedreen Gallery, Seattle University, Seattle, WA (2020); *Painting Is Its Own Country*, Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts + Culture, Charlotte, NC (2019); *Chambers & Weinberg*, Hawthorn Contemporary, Milwaukee, WI (2019); *Again, Always*, Green Hall Gallery, Yale University, New Haven, CT (2019); *Between Two Worlds*, Band of Vices, Los Angeles, CA (2019); *Interwoven*, Kravets Wehby Gallery, New York, NY (2018); *Water & Dreams*, The Green Gallery, Milwaukee, WI and Chicken Coop Contemporary, Portland, OR (2017); *NOW Figuration*, Portrait Society Gallery of Contemporary Art, Milwaukee, WI (2017); *Bridge Work 02: From Memory to Metaphor*, Arts + Literature Laboratory, Madison, WI (2017); *Post Mode 2.0*, John Fonda Gallery, Baltimore, MD (2016); *Bridge Work 02: From Memory to Metaphor*, The Pitch Project Gallery, Milwaukee, WI (2016); *Post Mode*, NYSRP Gallery, Brooklyn, NY (2015); *Final Exhibition*, Yale Norfolk School of Art, Norfolk, CT (2015); *Deconstructing the Local*, MIAD Galleries, Milwaukee, WI (2014); *Progress*, Contemporary Art Gallery, St. Louis Community College – Florissant Valley, St. Louis, MO (2013); and *Varsity Art XVIII*, Art Saint Louis, St. Louis, MO (2013).

Chambers' work is in a number of private and public collections, including the Green Family Foundation, Dallas, TX; Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Los Angeles, CA; and Pérez Art Museum Miami, Miami, FL. The artist is the recipient of the Robert Reed Drawing Scholarship, Yale University (2018); Ellen Battell Stoeckel Fellowship, Yale Norfolk School of Art (awarded through Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design) (2015); and the Varsity Art XVIII Award, St. Louis Community College – Florissant Valley, St. Louis, MO (2014). He has completed residences at the New York Studio Residency Program, Brooklyn, NY (2015), and the Yale Norfolk School of Art, Norfolk Historic District, CT (2015).



Portrait of Dominic Chambers in his New Haven studio, 2021. Photo by Daniel Kukla

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Rachel Lehmann and David Maupin co-founded Lehmann Maupin in 1996 in New York. Since inception, Lehmann Maupin has served as a leading contemporary art gallery with locations in the U.S., Europe, and Asia. For over 25 years, Lehmann Maupin has been instrumental in introducing international artists in new geographies and building long-lasting curatorial relationships. Known for championing diverse voices, the gallery's program proudly features artists whose work challenges notions of identity and shapes international culture. Today, the gallery has locations in New York, Hong Kong, Seoul and London, as well as a team in mainland China. In the past year with growing opportunities in new markets, the gallery has opened seasonal spaces in Aspen, Palm Beach, Taipei, and Beijing.

ABOUT *IN FOCUS*

In Focus presentations are a recent addition to the Lehmann Maupin program that allow the gallery to highlight a crucial aspect of an artist's practice. These installations offer public access to recent, or timely and significant works by the gallery's artists and provide greater flexibility for Lehmann Maupin to contextualize its growing international program. Installed in the gallery at 501 West 24th Street or showcased online, these presentations run concurrently with the gallery's existing exhibition program.



Exterior of Lehmann Maupin, 501 West 24th Street, New York. Photo by Matthew Herrmann