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Jordan Casteel: *In bloom*
September 8 - October 22, 2022

Jordan Casteel presents *In bloom*, an exhibition of nine figurative and landscape-based oil paintings. Completed in 2022 amid the artist's relocation to rural New York State, this body of work invests in the reciprocity between painter and subject through a renewed approach to community engagement and an increasingly poignant vantage point of self-reflection.

The sensory influence of a landscape has the capacity to connect or divide us, to inform our movements through space and the manners in which we relate to our surroundings, and to one another. Casteel sources her subject matter from her own photographs of the people of color who share and shape an environment, directly informing her own accessibility to the collective experience.

In a departure from the comforts of an inbuilt community, as portrayed in previous works ranging from the sidewalks of Harlem to the classroom at Rutgers University-Newark, the transition to a more secluded, sylvan landscape prompted a period of inner-contemplation that necessitated a new approach. Casteel took to social media to initiate an online discourse to connect with and act as a connector for people of color who resided in the area. The resulting forum encouraged discussion and mutual engagement; in turn, introducing the artist to *Morgan*, *Damani and Shola*, and *Marisa, Isabel and Sage*, who would later become the subjects of her paintings.

Morgan sits within a scene shaped by a gestural outline of light. The sun shines through the leaves of trees set behind Casteel's camera, casting a shadow of the lush natural surroundings like reflections in water. The sitter's silhouette against the backdrop of her home emphasizes the subject's physical occupation of space while suggesting an inherent duality that exists within each composition—the subject's personhood overlapped with the artist's interpretation through her own sense of self, as seen through the shadow of a secondary figure.

Inhabiting her new setting, engulfed in the natural ebb and flow of the seasons, Casteel contemplates the parallels that exist within the natural world and human nature—ever-evolving, always in motion. For the artist, the silent yet unwavering transition from winter to spring in *Magnolia* signifies an intuitive appreciation for our ability to grow, as one and en masse. Still-life compositions *Daffodil* and *Field Balm* serve as self-portraits, referencing the bounty of the land Casteel gardens and the daily uniform that is inseparable from that process.

Arguably her most personal work to-date, *Woven* portrays an intimate moment captured between Casteel and her partner, David. A private exchange is personified in the subtle grasp of two hands, a silent gesture of affection and encouragement. Unique to her practice, Casteel assumes the role of subject to her own voyeuristic observations.

Jordan Casteel (b. 1989, Denver, CO) received her BA from Agnes Scott College, Decatur, GA for Studio Art (2011) and her MFA in Painting and Printmaking from Yale School of Art, New Haven, CT (2014). In 2020, Casteel presented a solo exhibition titled *Within Reach* at the New Museum, New York, in conjunction with a fully illustrated catalogue published by the institution. Other recent institutional solo exhibitions include *Jordan Casteel: Returning the Gaze*, presented at both the Denver Art Museum, CO (2019), and the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University, CA (2019–20). In recent years, Casteel has participated in exhibitions at institutional venues such as Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) (2021); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA (2021); Art Institute of Chicago, IL (2021); Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY (2021); Crystal Bridges, Bentonville, AR (2021); Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL (2020); Kunsthal KAdE, Amersfoort, Netherlands (2020); Baltimore Museum of Art, MD (2019); MoCA Los Angeles, CA (2018); The Studio Museum in Harlem, NY (2017 and 2016); and MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA (2017). Casteel is the recipient of a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship (2021). *In bloom* marks the artist's third solo exhibition at Casey Kaplan, New York, on view through October 22, 2022.