

WHITE CUBE

Press Release

Tiona Nekkia McClodden
PURE GAZE
September 2 – October 18, 2025
White Cube New York

Press Preview and Artist Tour Tuesday, September 2, 2025, 10.30am–11.30am

White Cube presents a solo exhibition of fifteen sculptural paintings by Tiona Nekkia McClodden (b. 1981, Blytheville, Arkansas). Titled 'PURE GAZE,' the presentation debuts new works in the ongoing series 'NEVER LET ME GO' [2023 – onward], initiated as part of her solo exhibition at Kunsthalle Basel in 2023.

In 'PURE GAZE,' McClodden explores the idea of pressure through prolonged constriction, or a hold in excess of duration. Leather canvases are bound using traditional Japanese *kinbaku-bi* rope techniques and treated with a range of hand-dyed color processes that produce abstract blooms, visually invoking wounds or bruises. Per the practice of *kinbaku-bi*, each work is executed according to a particular order of operation and framed within the beauty of tight binding.

The first presentation of 'NEVER LET ME GO' consisted of five works featured within McClodden's 2023 Kunsthalle Basel solo exhibition 'THE POETICS OF BEAUTY WILL INEVITABLY RESORT TO THE MOST BASE PLEADINGS AND OTHER WILES IN ORDER TO SECURE ITS RELEASE,' which focused on concepts of pressure, power dynamics, and the flow of air. The idea of a "profane hold," or a pressure that goes beyond the desires and limits of human interaction, is the driving force behind the physical and conceptual tightness present in these works.

"For 'PURE GAZE,' I wanted to explore making work from a pure aesthetic framework, as well as the complexity of doing so, given my subjective being and intersectional identity, and its entanglement with society and the world. The attempt involved taking the position of the pure gaze in the studio; it felt more honest and allowed me to work from something internal to my process, towards the production of aesthetic-based work. Following Pierre Bourdieu's 1993 text *The Field of Cultural Production*, this was a way of acknowledging and suspending the subjective nature of my gaze, to prioritize form and aesthetic experience detached from practicality, function or social meaning. This work is a study of painting and sculpture."
– Tiona Nekkia McClodden

'PURE GAZE' is on view at White Cube New York from September 2 through October 18, 2025.

WHITE CUBE

For additional information, interview requests, or press images please contact:

Third Eye
whitecube@hellonthirdeye.com

White Cube
press@whitecube.com

Notes to Editors:

- Tiona Nekkia McClodden (b.1981, Blytheville, Arkansas) spent her formative years throughout the American South. Trained as a filmmaker, McClodden worked largely within the film industry before moving to Philadelphia in 2006 and expanding her studio practice to include painting, sculpture, photography and installation.

Recent solo exhibitions include White Cube, London (2024); Baltimore Museum of Art (2023); Kunsthalle Basel (2023); The Shed, New York (2022); 52 Walker, New York (2022); and Company Gallery, New York (2019). Selected group exhibitions include Phillips Collection, Washington DC (2025); Solomon R. Guggenheim, New York (2023–24); El Museo del Barrio, New York (2022–23), touring to Phoenix Art Museum (2023) and Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami (2023–24); ICA Los Angeles (2022); Prospect 5, New Orleans (2021–22); Philadelphia Museum of Art (2021); New Museum, New York (2021); Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (2019); and the Whitney Biennial, New York (2019). Other presentations of her work have been on view at MoMA, New York (2022-2023); MOCA, Los Angeles (2017); MCA Chicago (2017); and MoMA PS1, New York (2016).

In recent years, McClodden has won prestigious grants and fellowships, including the Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant (2022), Princeton Arts Fellowship (2021–23); the Bucksbaum Award, Whitney Museum of American Art (2019); Guggenheim Fellowship in Fine Arts (2019); the Louis Comfort Tiffany Award (2017); and the Pew Fellowship (2016). In 2020, she founded Conceptual Fade, a project gallery and library that hosts micro-exhibitions and publications centered on Black art and conceptual practice.

- White Cube's exhibition programme extends across locations in London, Hong Kong, Paris, New York, Seoul and online. Since its inception in 1993, the gallery has exhibited the work of many of the world's most highly acclaimed contemporary artists.
- Follow White Cube on [Instagram](#); [Facebook](#); [WeChat 微信](#); and [Xiaohongshu](#)