

# RYAN TRAVIS CHRISTIAN

b. 1983 Oakland, CA

Lives and works in Chicago, IL



CRYIN RYAN, 2021, Oil and graphite on canvas stretched over panel, 48h x 60w in

Ryan Travis Christian's 1990s suburban Chicago upbringing offered up absurd experiences, which he uses as fuel for the surreal personal narratives in his pop-culture-influenced graphite drawings. Impacted by Chicago-style figuration, Christian focuses on the paradoxical relationship between childish cartoons and ominous messages, musing on the technological and material obsolescence of his inspiration. Vintage political cartoons and hand-drawn animation influence Christian's detailed vignettes—namely from Ub Iwerks, George Condo, and the Hairy Who—Christian comes to terms with his sources' sordid pasts while embracing their richness and flavor. Christian carefully and densely layers graphite to reveal high contrast graphics and dizzying patterns; wiggly figures are rendered in slow motion, living among hazy landscapes and melting fences. He exposes the untidy lifestyle of contemporary humanity through a vast array of topics and imagery; the economy, the environment, gender, class, hope, and doubt are contemplated with drugs, heavy petting, alcohol, violence, depression, death, and the afterlife. Christian's recent work has expanded to comment on current nationwide and worldwide crises: his historical precedents become mirrors reflecting the common concerns of the present. Text is prevalent in Christian's work, coming mostly from personal notes-to-self about conversations or encounters that have stuck around long enough to remain relevant to him and keep up to the caliber of his source.

Ryan Travis Christian's solo and two-person shows include *Over the Influence*, Hong Kong; Ross+Kramer Gallery in New York, NY; Arsham/Fieg Gallery in New York, NY; Richard Heller Gallery in Santa Monica, CA; the Contemporary Art Museum in Raleigh, NC; and *The Hole* in New York. Christian has been included in group shows in Antwerp, Berlin, Brussels, Copenhagen, Detroit, Los Angeles, London, New York, Paris, Reykjavik, Rotterdam, San Francisco, and Toronto. His work has been written about in *frieze*, *ArtNews*, *Art Papers*, *Juxtapoz*, *New American Paintings*, *Artsy*, *Artspace*, *Daily Serving*, *Indy Week* and the *Associated Press*. *DAZED* recently named Christian as one of the “[top ten artists working with monochrome](#).” He is represented by Western Exhibitions in Chicago and lives and works in the Chicagoland area.

Christian has had four solo shows with Western Exhibitions, most recently in the spring of 2021.

# AZIKIWE MOHAMMED

b. 1983, New York, NY

Lives and works in New York City, NY

Mohammed will have his first show with Western Exhibitions in 2022, opening on April 29.

*Waiting at 7:22pm, Curtain Open, 2021*  
Acrylic and gouache on board, 18h x 22w in



*These objects are all different parts of one object. Time is felt most often by those who wait for it. Be it waiting for something to happen, waiting for the thing that has happened to pass or the shoe to drop in either of those directions. We often find ourselves in-between times with un-made decisions. Over the course of a few hours, days will pass but the hours we perform action inside will return to us the following day if desired. These are a few of those hours, these are hours I know well, these are the hours promised to me and to people who look like me. Sometimes they are used for rest between other sets of hours but often they are used for waiting. I have forgotten what I am waiting for and only remember the action now, but in an action is the memory of others who have taken similar. These are a few of those actions. - Azikiwe Mohammed on his work at NADA Miami*

Azikiwe Mohammed's work — painting, photography, sculpture, performance and found ephemera — is rooted in themes of Black place-making. Interested in constructing spaces of safety and welcome for people of color and for immigrants whose space is often threatened, Mohammed, who self-identifies not as an artist, but as a “dude who makes stuff”—often makes temporary homes and physical spaces for Black people. Sometimes he designs places to relax, environments where a shared language is spoken, or sometimes places where new languages can be created. His exhibitions turn galleries into homey spaces intended to put all visitors at ease. Using art to invoke community uplift is also key to his practice and lives now in his recently launched Black Painter's Academy, offering free classes and mutual aid in lower Manhattan.

An ongoing part of the artist's practice orbits around New Davonhaime, a city conceived of by Mohammed that provides a look at a sustainable version of a self-dictated future for black/African-American residents of this country, as well as being a site of interventions and actions in both formal and non-traditional exhibition spaces. Its name is derived from a linguistic mashup of the five American cities with the highest density of African-American residents in the U.S. (New Orleans, Louisiana; Detroit, Michigan; Jackson, Mississippi; Birmingham, Alabama; and Savannah, Georgia), and is a conceptual departure point for much of the artist's recent work.

Azikiwe Mohammed is a 2005 graduate of Bard College, where he studied photography and fine arts, Mohammed received the Art Matters Grant in 2015 and the Rema Hort Mann Emerging Artist Grant in 2016. Mohammed's solo exhibitions include the Knockdown Center, Maspeth, New York; SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA; Ace Hotel Chicago, Illinois; IDIO Gallery, Brooklyn, New York; Mindy Solomon Gallery, Miami, FL and Anna Zorina Gallery, New York, NY; as well as multiple solo offerings at Spring Break Art Show, New York. He has participated in group exhibitions at MoMA PS1, Queens, New York; Antenna Gallery, New Orleans, Louisiana; Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles, California and the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, among others. He is an alumnus of Pioneer Works in Brooklyn, New York, and Mana Contemporary in Jersey City, New Jersey. His work has been featured extensively in magazines, including VICE, I-D, Artforum, Forbes, BOMB and Hyperallergic.

# LAUREN WY

b. 1987, Long Beach, CA

Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA



Lauren Wy is a drawer and painter whose work investigates the desiring body and psyche as fractal narrative and residue of process and color. She is interested in the idea of alternative identity formation in a world that contains both real and digital space; using esoteric media to speak of the digitally assisted psychological evolution of the present future past.

She is currently working toward the completion of an image-based multi-volume graphic novel saga: AUTODESIRE whose drawings, process-based erotic rhizomes made from partial narratives both owned and stolen; use layered markings to constantly destroy and re-form and embrace melancholic capaciousness as a healing modality. AUTODESIRE drawings exploit the erotic density of oil-wax pastels to inset Thanatos/Eros into a geological temporality, leaning on optical blending and the weight of deep marks. The final drawings will be mounted to panel and varnished, while the final collection of 440 drawings will be published as a single novel.

Wy's work was most recently shown in the *Western Exhibitions Drawing Biennial* in Chicago IL; *ANTI, the 6th Athens Biennale* in Greece; Kunstraum Walcheturm in Zurich, and at Apparatus Projects and Practise Gallery, both in Chicago and this fall will be included in *\_Espressioni* at Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea in Turin, Italy. Wy received her MFA from Northwestern University in 2020 and she lives and works in Los Angeles.

Wy's first solo show at Western Exhibitions ran from September 17 to October 31, 2021 and was reviewed in [Sixty Inches from Center](#).

# JADE YUMANG

b. 1981, Quezon City, Phillipines  
Lives and works in Chicago

Jade Yumang examines how queer optics permeate into culture, absorbed, embodied, repeated, and eventually materialized into deviating forms through a variety of techniques to convey notions of phenomenology, affect, and “queer” as a process. This strategy is usually executed through three-dimensional, site-specific installation, and performative work as a way to see how the body resists or submits through materiality and technique vis-à-vis obsessive acts, strict parameters, and forms of discipline. Recent works have been based on historical amnesia, myths, scandal trials, obscenity laws, love, kinship, filmic tropes, and pornography. Typically, these ideas are tackled through a large series to tease out its formal qualities with the context that repetition creates differences and asserts a constant change. Jade filters this work primarily using fiber techniques as a direct physical touch to concept, ways of worldmaking, and acknowledge its complex history through a queer misalignment in order to collapse boundaries.

Selected solo shows include: Art-in-Buildings, 125 Maiden Lane, Time Equities Inc., New York, NY; CP Projects Space, New York, NY; Art League Houston Main Gallery, Houston, TX; TRUCK Contemporary Art, Calgary, AB; and Eastern Edge Gallery, St. John’s, NL. Selected group shows include: Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI; Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, KS; Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA; Western Exhibitions, Chicago IL; BronxArtSpace, Bronx, NY; The Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, New York, NY; District of Columbia Arts Center, Washington, DC; Equity Gallery, New York, NY; INVISIBLE-EXPORTS, New York, NY; and ONE Archives, Los Angeles, CA. Jade is the recipient of several grants from Canada Council for the Arts and British Columbia Arts Council. Jade was born in Quezon City, Philippines, grew up in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, immigrated to unceded Coast Salish territories in Vancouver, BC, Canada, and lives in Chicago, IL, USA, which sits on the traditional homelands of the people of the Council of Three Fires, the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, and Odawa as well as the Menominee, Miami and Ho-Chunk nations. Jade is an Assistant Professor in the department of Fiber and Material Studies at School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Yumang will have his first show with Western Exhibitions in 2022, opening on November 4.



*Mini Oak Bay Titian No. 250*

2020

Archival ink on cotton, wallpaper, cotton, wool,  
fiberfill, batting, binder’s board, dye,  
basswood, pine, and hardware  
36h x 9w x 12d in