

JAMES ROSS

BFA MANIFEST 2023 SHOW



DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES

May 12-June 6, 2023

OUT OF THE BASEMENT: 2023 UNDERGRADUATE FINE ARTS THESIS EXHIBITION

May 12–June 6, 2023

Reception: Friday, May 12, 5–7 p.m.

The Hollis Sigler Manifest Awards will be announced at 6 p.m.

During the reception on May 12, there will be a performance by Cordelia Weatherby from 5–5:45 p.m.

Out of the Basement: 2023 Undergraduate Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition features the works of thirteen BFA candidates in Columbia's Fine Arts program. The exhibition, which includes paintings, drawings, sculpture, prints, books, garments, video, performance, and installation works, represents the culmination of four years of development of a cohesive body of work for each artist while earning their degrees.

Participating artists: Jacob Ashba, Charlotte Briskin, Daniela Castro, Michelle Goldshmidt, Amairani Martinez, Ariaunna McCloud, emmalyn mueller, Kevin Rivera, Carolina Romo, James Ross, Sofie Way, Cordelia Weatherby, Emma Wilmarth.

Out of the Basement: 2023 Undergraduate Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition is presented in conjunction with the Department of Exhibitions, Performance, and Student Spaces (DEPS) and the Art and Art History department, and Adam Brooks, Professor at Columbia College Chicago.

JAMES ROSS

In their work, **James Ross** creates histories that never were, Medieval Western European stories that center Black and Queer experience. The works, comprised of oil paintings on wood, focus primarily on the nude masculine body. They use the nude as a way to communicate histories of queer sex, connection to class, the vulnerability of the masculine body as well as the racialized history of the body. They insert these narratives into a rewritten history to explore their identity and complicated interests. They are trying to answer the question of, as a Black American with European ancestry, how much of the history I wish to rewrite belongs to me?

James Ross is a Chicago based painter; their work focuses on the Black queer experience through a historical lens. Their work includes 3d prints, paintings, drawings, and mixed media collage.



The Exhibited Gaze of an Eager Worker, Left, 2022, oil on wood panel, 10" x 8"



Saint Luciano, 2022, oil on wood panel, 54" x 54"



Denken, 2022, gesso ink jet print graphite on wood panel 14" x 11"



Saint Osmund, and Edmunds Reliquary, 2022, oil and gold leaf on wood panel, 12" x 8"



Saint Osmund, and Edmunds Reliquary, 2022, oil, acrylic and gold leaf, gemstones on wood panel
12" x 14" x 8"



Kiss me Again, 2022, gesso India ink, ink jet print on wood panel, 14" x 11"



Portrait of Prince Agnolo, 2022, oil on wood panel, 48" x 24"

INTERVIEW WITH JAMES ROSS

Conducted by Sierra Delamarter

Sierra Delamarter: What draws you to the era of Medieval Western European artwork? Where do you draw inspiration for the composition and content of your paintings?

James Ross: As a kid I went to an exhibition that was showing items from Princess Diana's life and among those objects were medieval paintings of her Spencer dynasty relatives. Those portraits left a deep impression on me which led me to start my college education studying English medieval history and lead to me placing this series of work in that visual timeframe. I draw a lot from Illustrated Manuscripts, they have a special way of telling a story that I deeply appreciate.

SD: Many of your work titles contain iconic names. Could you explain who some of these people are and how they relate to your themes of the black and queer experience and its history?

JR: Each figure in each painting exists as a story in a secret world. When I am not painting those figures, I write about a world that is parallel to our own. It is my own way of quietly rewriting and retelling histories. They are deposed princes and forgotten rebels, I keep this aspect of their stories to myself, and the viewer is left only with the object. The story has been erased, hidden, intentionally removed.

SD: Your style ranges from striking collages with rigid lines to softly blended oil paintings- using a combination of primary colors, gold leaf, and the masculine, nude body. How do these artistic choices lend to the expressions of the major themes in your work?

JR: I employ both techniques as a way to present different dialogues. For my collages I want them to have a connection to our real lived world. With my paintings I want them to exist in a space of fantasy. In my collages

those are real lived bodies, my paintings are imaginary bodies, I use the body as the "tie" between my two styles to lend to some sort of visual consistency. The nude body is timeless and has the ability to be placed in any context, so I can easily create work about various times and contexts that will still represent my "hand".

SD: Your work primarily exists on wooden panels, often featuring or becoming sculptural pieces. Has this choice of medium always been prevalent in your work? How have your preferences grown or changed as an artist? What are your goals and plans going forward with your work?

JR: I have only recently begun to work with wooden panels, before I would do large scale paintings on unstretched canvas. The flatness of the wood panels and their ability to create a very smooth surface is what drew me to using them. I wanted to scale my work down and work with a surface that I could really press into with my brush without leaving dents or impressions.



THE DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES

The DEPS Artist Profile Series presented by Columbia College Chicago's Department of Exhibitions, Performance and Student Spaces (DEPS), is a virtual publication on select artists involved with the DEPS Galleries and the Columbia College Chicago community. Our goal with this series is to connect artist and viewer on a deeper level, and to highlight the amazing works and thoughts of our featured artists through interviews, artist biographies, and catalogs of work. Art has always been a way to connect with others, no matter where one may physically be. We hope by presenting the creativity and insights of the people involved in the DEPS Artist Profile Series that viewers may have one more way to stay in touch with and support the arts community. The DEPS Artist Profile Series is managed by DEPS Exhibitions Assistant Rachel Manlubatan and Sierra Delamarter. Graphic design is also managed by DEPS Exhibitions Assistant Rachel Manlubatan. This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Learn more at: colum.edu/deps

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Glass Curtain Gallery: 1104 S Wabash Ave, First Floor, Chicago, IL 60605

Gallery Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.