

# McArthur's Pick

## Curated by McArthur Binion

**For his curatorial debut at MASSIMODECARLO's VSpace, McArthur Binion has chosen Basie Allen, Fernão Cruz, Benjamin Giska, Carole Harris, John Phillips and Donna Tadelman; 6 artists working in diverse mediums, from different generations, giving us a glimpse into his personal taste, and his vision of the artworld today.**

Presented together for the first time, the exhibition reveals these artists' shared virtuosity in composition, tact with color and optimism. From Carole Harris' complex large-scale quilted works to Donna Tadelman's compact minimalist abstractions, the exhibition is as bright as it is poetic.

Bursting with gestural energy, *Two Vows (Number 18)* by Basie Allen is an abstract composition combining acrylic, oil stick, tarp transfer and newspaper print. The two-panel work is part of his *Two vows series*, which hides Twombly-esque handwritten messages between the various layers of paint. Hand in hand with Allen's poetics, Carole Harris composes her quilt wall sculptures with a similar awareness of gesture and movement by combining patterns, stitches, and textures. The works' titles, such as *The Time When* or *Got a Right to Be*, are as evocative of deeper, personal meaning as they are brightly intricate.

Benjamin Giska, Donna Tadelman and John Phillips create a symbiotic trio: their abstract paintings are a contrast to the exhibition's textured works. Each one heralding its own geometrics, *Blue*, *Stardust* and *D-Town* are three iterations of the possibilities of abstraction: a direct treatment of color (*Blue*), an interpretation of existing forms (*Stardust*) or a representation of a place (*D-Town*). Their color blocking, geometric combinations offer powerful, dense, and controlled compositions within the frames of their canvases.

Finally, Fernão Cruz's *There's always a way out*, presents a textured, almost fleshy, brightly lit door basking in golden light. With darker marks that appear to be the viewer's own shadow, offering our way out of the exhibition.

**Basie Allen** (b. 1989) is a poet and visual artist from New York City's Lower East Side. His work carves parentheses in-between dirt and feeling. In 2020 he was nominated for a Pushcart Prize. His poem "Psychic Cartography" is included in MoMA/P.S.1's Homeroom series of online publications.

**Fernão Cruz** (b. 1995) lives and works in Lisbon, Portugal. He graduated from FBAUL with a degree in Painting (2017). Between 2016 and 2017 Fernão lived, studied, and worked in Barcelona, at the Universitat de Barcelona: Facultat de Belles Arts. In 2018 he presented the book *Stretching Can Be Easy* (2018), in collaboration with Rui da Paz. He has been the featured artist in residence with BananaJam Art Space (2017) in Shenzhen, China, and the CEAC (2018), at Vila Nova da Barquinha, Portugal. He was also the winner of the Arte Jovem 2017 prize, awarded by Carpe Diem Art and Research + Millenium Bcp Foundation.

**Benjamin Giska** (b. 1990) is an inter-disciplinary artist, musician and skateboarder that lives and works in Chicago. After earning his Bachelor's Degree in Painting from Columbia College, he started following McArthur Binion as studio assistant till the present day. Giska developed his own brand of graffiti/street art/muralism deploying it throughout Chicagoland. His murals can also be found in Jamaica, Colombia, and throughout the USA.

**Carole Harris** is a fiber artist who has redefined and subverted the basic concepts of quilting to suit her own purposes. She extends the boundaries of traditional quilting by exploring other forms of stitchery, irregular shapes, textures, materials, and objects. Harris is captivated by the interplay of hue and pattern, often drawing inspiration from the color, energy, movement, and rhythms of ethnographic rituals and textiles: as well as the music of changing rhythms and history of the city of Detroit where she lives and works. Her mother introduced her to needle arts at an early age, teaching her embroidery and crocheting. Sewing classes in elementary school increased her skills. It wasn't until she received a BFA in art from Wayne State University in Detroit in 1966 that she began to explore fibers as an art form.

**John Phillips** (b. 1953) is an American artist that lives and works in Chicago, Illinois. His work is part of major collections such as Modern Ancient Brown, Detroit; Metropolitan Museum of Art, NYC; The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; The Rockford Art Museum, Rockford, Illinois.

**Donna Tadelman** (b. 1952) lives and works in Chicago, Illinois. She received her bachelor's degree from Kansas City Art Institute in 1974. Her work comprises a wide range of mediums, including hard edge abstraction, stripe paintings and a variety of assisted ready-mades. Her work is included in collections at the Smart Museum, the Minneapolis Institute of Art, the Rockford Art Museum, and the Roger Brown Study Collection.