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Will Murchison: *That Gentle Hue* Opens at Erin Cluley Gallery with a Reception January 6th, 2024

[Dallas, Texas – November 21st, 2023] **ERIN CLULEY GALLERY** is pleased to announce *That Gentle Hue* – an exhibition of new work by Dallas-based artist Will Murchison. The exhibition will be on view January 6th through February 10th, 2024, at the gallery’s main location, 150 Manufacturing Street, Suite 210. **An opening reception will be held Saturday, January 6th, 2024, from 5 – 7 PM.** The gallery is open weekly Wednesday through Saturday, 12 – 5 PM and by appointment.

In his third solo presentation with Erin Cluley Gallery, Dallas-based painter Will Murchison stretches his characteristic abstraction into new works on paper. The large-scale work in *That Gentle Hue* dedicates its pastel color palette and organicism to the emotive power of color, shape, and composition. Here, Murchison applies his enigmatic techniques—such as using dried acrylic ‘skins’ as collage materials alongside traditional paper collage—to dizzying effect.

Drawing on centuries of Western literature, art history, and mythology, Murchison’s work investigates the history of images and language as ways to create meaning. The artist’s hyper-referential titles and collaged texts blend with fluid abstraction to create a kind of topographic view of the present, past, and their absurd in-betweens.

Murchison devises his paintings through a free and fluid process: resembling the growth of living things, his marks undulate and curve around large fields of vibrant pastels. Murchison’s experimental use of found materials and abstract style put him in conversation with such contemporaries as Mark Bradford, Ellen Gallagher, Justin Caguiat, and Elliott Hundley. Before beginning his work, the artist accumulates a repository of collage materials including cuttings from mid-century magazines, quotes from antique books, and acrylic ‘skins’ he creates from poured paint. Engaging his body and the floor of his studio, Murchison free pours acrylic paint into fluid patterns. After drying, Murchison peels these ‘skins’ and reappropriates them into his work sometimes using a hole-punch and or other unconventional tools.

The exhibition’s title, *That Gentle Hue* references the second part, “Purgatorio”, of medieval poet and philosopher Dante Alighieri’s canonical 15th-century text, *The Divine Comedy*. As Virgil, the narrator of Dante’s theological adventure, and Dante himself leave the “Inferno,” they are enveloped by “*that gentle hue* of oriental sapphire.” Focusing on this moment of sublime imagery, Murchison speaks to the expressive power of color in art;

On a more intimate scale, the title sets the work within his own journey through limbo that is at once very personal and rooted in tradition. Among the other work in *That Gentle Hue*, the breadth of Murchison's citation allows him to sweep history with his unique and beautifying brush.

That Gentle Hue will be Murchison's third solo exhibition with Erin Cluley Gallery.

Murchison's first solo exhibition with the gallery was in 2020.

About the Artist

Will Murchison (b. 1987) was born in Dallas, Texas. In 2010, he obtained a B.A. in Art History from The University of Dallas. He went on to earn a J.D. from Southern Methodist Universities Dedman School of Law in 2014 and after graduation, practiced law in Dallas until 2018.

Murchison makes dense, abstract collages composed of found paper and acrylic paint. He relies on a framework of mid-century abstraction and explores the history of the Western canon. Using lifestyle magazines, Murchison cuts images of contemporary prosperity into distorted, oozing shapes that he layers within a web of bold colors. The resulting paintings are shattered compositions that reflect on the history of abstraction and on society's conception of its past.

Murchison has exhibited at the University of Dallas and with Erin Cluley Gallery. His work is included in the collection of the University of Dallas. The artist currently lives and works in Dallas, Texas.

About Erin Cluley Gallery

Erin Cluley Gallery is a contemporary art gallery representing emerging, mid-career, and established artists from Dallas and the United States. The gallery presents a provocative program of artists working in both traditional and alternative forms including painting, sculpture, new media, photography, sculptural installation and public intervention.

In 2014, Erin Cluley Gallery ignited a creative movement in West Dallas acting as a hub for visual arts and community engagement. After nearly five years on Fabrication Street, the gallery has moved its operation to Riverbend – a development in Dallas' Design District celebrating the intersection between culture and commerce.

In April 2021, Cluley opened Cluley Projects – a satellite location in West Dallas acting as an incubator space focusing on regional artists and providing a platform for discovery and mentorship.

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