

**JAMES HARRIS GALLERY  
4829 GRETNA ST #102  
DALLAS, TX 75207-5221  
T(214)272-8427 C(206)903-6220  
JAMESHARRISGALLERY.COM**

**PRESS RELEASE**



Ronald Hall  
“Remnants”  
November 9 to December 21, 2024  
Gallery Hours:  
Wed to Sat 11:30-5:30PM  
and by appointment  
Reception: November 9<sup>th</sup>, 4-6PM

Left:  
“The Rebirth” 2023  
Acrylic on canvas  
18” x 24”

James Harris Gallery is pleased to present our first solo exhibition with New York artist Ronald Hall. The artist combines fiction and nonfiction in his narrative paintings, crafting otherworldly spaces where figures contemplate and navigate the complexities of the past, present, and future. Hall’s creative process is greatly influenced by Surrealism; reverberating its historical practices of creating an atmosphere where everything can be called into question. It allows Hall to challenge our buried histories and bring to fore the truths of the Black experience. The subject of his paintings often draws from actual events as well as from his personal experiences growing up in the 1970-80s in the challenging environments of Pittsburgh. Hall’s portraits and narrative compositions investigate ideas of race and class to reevaluate American history through the lens of the Black diaspora.

Hall paints with a heightened sense of color to create mystery, mood and ambience. Using digital tools in his creative process before each painting begins, the artist is able to experiment with color and scale, allowing him freedom to create a world that destabilizes reality, while also expressing hopes, dreams and revolution of a more inclusive future. Hall transforms familiar domestic spaces, southern plantations, and various architectural structures into dreamscapes to investigate past and present issues of systemic racism. He often references protest imagery from the civil rights era as well as other media references to expose racial bias. He delves not only into the history of emancipation but also the horrors of the events that led to systematic exploitation of people of color. Drawing on his decade long career in the video gaming industry has enable Hall to depict a noir cinematic world in which the action is familiar yet ambiguous. This tension imbues his compositions with a state of suspended animation where the action is waiting for the viewer to play it out. He exploits this conflict through visual cues but where specifics remain elusive.

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In the painting titled "The Rebirth", birds fly over a pastoral landscape based on the John Savage 1787 painting of George Washington's Mount Vernon's plantation. In the left foreground, a man stands with his back to the viewer wearing a T-shirt with an image based on the art of the Black Panther Party. The shirt is an homage to Emory Douglas who created the artwork for all of the Black Panther's propaganda. On the right side is a little girl holding strings attaching to smaller marionette-like figures symbolizing the importance of strong family ties within the black community. The strings also refer to the history of slavery in America and how Black families are still affected by it to this day. In the background, Hall has painted a large windowless multi-story building with ribbons of energy coming out of its roof to enhance the ominous mood of the narrative. Hall's combination of elements from past and present evokes an unsettling feeling.

Challenging artistic conventions of Black representation and the shadows of its history, Hall's hopes to question the underlying truth of growing up Black in America. He keenly uses familiar elements and recognizable imagery to investigate contemporary political, racial and social constructs that still exists in our world today. By drawing attention to our misapprehensions and using a combination of visually signifiers, Hall creates poetic moments that questions the past and present. More importantly, he is creating a more positive future for all of us.

A Pittsburgh native, Hall honed his artistic skills at the High School for Creative and Performing Arts, the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. In 1999, he relocated to Seattle, becoming an artist-member of a Seattle based gallery called Gallery 110 and showcasing his work at prominent Northwestern institutions like The Tacoma Museum, The Seattle Art Museum, and The Wing Luke Asian Museum. Hall has been honored with numerous prestigious awards and grants, including the Gottlieb Foundation Grant, the Pollock-Krasner Grant, Headlands Center For The Arts Residency, a 2024 NYSCA/NYFA Artist Fellow in Painting, The Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program, The Bronx Museum of the Arts AIM Program, the Lillian Orlowsky and William Freed Grant, and the 2013 Artist Fellowship Award in Seattle.