

# ATLANTA CONTEMPORARY

Changing the way we all see art.

## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release



Image Credit: Interior, Sam Gilliam Studio, 2003. Photography by Sam Gilliam, courtesy of Greg Head.

## Atlanta Contemporary announces the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Exhibitions

***Sam Gilliam***

Curated by Veronica L. Hogan

***Hasani Sahlehe***

Curated by Y. Malik Jalal

**FREE ADMISSION  
EVERY DAY**

**Tue–Sat** 12pm–5pm

**Thu** 12–8pm

**Sun** 12pm–4pm

**Mon** Closed

535 Means St. NW

Atlanta, GA 30318

404-688-1970

[support@atlantacontemporary.org](mailto:support@atlantacontemporary.org)

[atlantacontemporary.org](http://atlantacontemporary.org)

**On View:** August 24, 2023 – December 23, 2024

**Private Opening:** Thursday, August 24, 2023 from 6 to 7pm

**Public Opening:** Thursday, August 24, 2023 from 7 to 9pm

# ATLANTA CONTEMPORARY

Changing the way we all see art.

**ATLANTA** — June 29, 2023 — In celebration of the organization's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Atlanta Contemporary (AC) announces two major solo exhibitions that showcase legacy artist, Sam Gilliam, in dialogue with emerging artist Hasani Sahlehe.

Atlanta Contemporary, today a celebrated non-collecting museum, began in 1973 as an artist-run space dedicated to contemporary art exhibitions. It has been Atlanta Contemporary's mission for 50 years to be a platform for emerging and established artists to exhibit their work. In honor of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Atlanta Contemporary presents dynamic exhibitions that honor our past and look to the future.

## ***Sam Gilliam***

**Curated by Veronica L. Hogan**

Sam Gilliam, known for his groundbreaking contributions to the Color Field movement and his innovative approaches to abstraction, reshaped the boundaries of contemporary art throughout his illustrious career. His masterful fusion of color, form, and materiality has earned critical acclaim and an esteemed place in the canon of art history.

This exhibition brings together a curated selection of Gilliam's artworks spanning various periods of his career. Including, but not limited to, works on paper, sculptural assemblages, and painted tapestry, AC's audiences will have the rare opportunity to immerse themselves in the artist's dynamic and visually stunning creations. Occupying the entirety of Gallery 3, this exhibition presents Gilliam's artworks on a scale and with a breadth heretofore unseen in the region.

"With the utmost gratitude to artist Kevin Cole and the incredible regional collectors who have so willingly agreed to loan artworks from their collections, it is my pleasure to announce this remarkable exhibition," says Veronica L. Hogan, director of Atlanta Contemporary. "Gilliam, who has exhibited in the Atlanta Contemporary galleries over the past 50 years, represents some of the best in abstraction. It is our privilege to showcase his artworks

**FREE ADMISSION  
EVERY DAY**

**Tue–Sat** 12pm–5pm

**Thu** 12–8pm

**Sun** 12pm–4pm

**Mon** Closed

535 Means St. NW

Atlanta, GA 30318

404-688-1970

[support@atlantacontemporary.org](mailto:support@atlantacontemporary.org)

[atlantacontemporary.org](http://atlantacontemporary.org)

# ATLANTA CONTEMPORARY

Changing the way we all see art.

and place them in dialogue with emerging abstract painter, Hasani Sahlehe.”

## About Sam Gilliam

Sam Gilliam was one of the great innovators in postwar American painting. He emerged from the Washington, D.C. scene in the mid 1960s with works that elaborated upon and disrupted the ethos of Color School painting.

A series of formal breakthroughs would soon result in his canonical Drape paintings, which expanded upon the tenets of Abstract Expressionism in entirely new ways. Suspending stretcher-less lengths of painted canvas from the walls or ceilings of exhibition spaces, Gilliam transformed his medium and the contexts in which it was viewed. As an artist in the nation’s capital at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, this was not merely an aesthetic proposition; it was a way of defining art’s role in a society undergoing dramatic change. Gilliam pursued a pioneering course in which experimentation was the only constant. Inspired by the improvisatory ethos of jazz, his lyrical abstractions took on an increasing variety of forms, moods, and materials.

In addition to a traveling retrospective organized by the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. in 2005, Sam Gilliam was the subject of solo exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (1971); The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (1982); Whitney Museum of American Art, Philip Morris Branch, New York (1993); J.B. Speed Memorial Museum, Louisville, Kentucky (1996); Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C. (2011); and Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland (2018), among many other institutions. A semi-permanent installation of Gilliam’s paintings opened at Dia:Beacon in August 2019. His work is included in over fifty public collections, including those of the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Tate Modern, London; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and the Art Institute of Chicago.

## About Veronica L. Hogan

Having worked in the field of contemporary art for nearly 20 years, Veronica L. Hogan serves as Executive Director for Atlanta Contemporary. In addition to her director role, Hogan continues to engage the art community as arts administrator, art historian, board

**FREE ADMISSION  
EVERY DAY**

**Tue–Sat** 12pm–5pm

**Thu** 12–8pm

**Sun** 12pm–4pm

**Mon** Closed

535 Means St. NW  
Atlanta, GA 30318  
404-688-1970

[support@atlantacontemporary.org](mailto:support@atlantacontemporary.org)  
[atlantacontemporary.org](http://atlantacontemporary.org)

# ATLANTA CONTEMPORARY

Changing the way we all see art.

member, curator, educator, and lecturer. She has curated numerous exhibitions in Atlanta for Agnes Scott College, Kessenich Contemporary (2011-2014), the Art Institute of Atlanta and Decatur (2009-2013), and was gallery and sales director for Fay Gold Gallery (2004-2010). Hogan earned her M. Phil in Art History from St. Andrews University, Scotland, in 2004.



Image Credit: Hasani Sahlehe, *In the Loop*. 2023. Courtesy of Hasani Sahlehe.

**FREE ADMISSION  
EVERY DAY**

**Tue–Sat** 12pm–5pm

**Thu** 12–8pm

**Sun** 12pm–4pm

**Mon** Closed

535 Means St. NW  
Atlanta, GA 30318  
404-688-1970

[support@atlantacontemporary.org](mailto:support@atlantacontemporary.org)  
[atlantacontemporary.org](http://atlantacontemporary.org)

**Hasani Sahlehe | *You Really Gotta See It Live***  
**Curated by Y. Malik Jalal**

# ATLANTA CONTEMPORARY

Changing the way we all see art.

Through the physical pliancy of paint, Atlanta-based artist Hasani Sahlehe creates artworks of pure spirit. Exploring spirituality and the connection of body, mind, and spirit, Sahlehe's abstract paintings feature soft-edged forms that intermingle, resonate, and reverberate.

Having previously exhibited at Atlanta Contemporary twice – Sliver Space (2018) and the Atlanta Biennale (2021) – this exhibition is the artist's first major solo exhibition at the museum. Curated by Y. Malik Jalal, this exhibition brings together multiple paintings ranging in scale from the minute to monumental and upon varied surfaces. All created within the last year, this new body of work continues Sahlehe's ongoing endeavor to expand the artistic universe.

Atlanta Contemporary invites our audiences to immerse themselves in this exhibition and explore the healing potential of tranquility.

## About Hasani Sahlehe

Hasani Sahlehe grew up in a four-generation home in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. He was raised by his grandmother and among his many relatives, several of whom were musicians, educators, artists, and fervent preservers of local history and culture.

Sahlehe graduated from Savannah College of Art and Design in 2015. His practice, keenly centered on color and exploring the possibilities of the body of paint, seeks to engage the spiritual through the material. He sees his paintings as bearers of human memory, emotion, and presence. Sahlehe's work is rooted in abstraction, embracing a broad array of cultural practices, including color field painting, neo-expressionism, ancient and indigenous architecture and writing, and the syncretic, often improvised nature of hip hop,

Sahlehe is a recipient of a 2023 Macdowell Fellowship. He has exhibited internationally and has had solos at SCAD Museum of Art, Adams and Ollman in Portland, OR, Tops Gallery in Memphis, TN, and Gallery 12.26, in Dallas, TX among others.

## About Y. Malik Jalal

Y. Malik Jalal is an artist based in Atlanta, GA. He received his BA in Studio Art from Oglethorpe University in 2016. Jalal was born in Savannah, GA, and raised in the Atlanta suburbs. He paints and

**FREE ADMISSION  
EVERY DAY**

**Tue–Sat** 12pm–5pm

**Thu** 12–8pm

**Sun** 12pm–4pm

**Mon** Closed

535 Means St. NW  
Atlanta, GA 30318

404-688-1970

[support@atlantacontemporary.org](mailto:support@atlantacontemporary.org)

[atlantacontemporary.org](http://atlantacontemporary.org)

# ATLANTA CONTEMPORARY

Changing the way we all see art.

makes images and objects. His work is equally personal and fictitious, rooted in both the artist's own identity and his relationship to the collective cultural identity and history of the African diaspora in the American South. In 2018, his work was included in a two-person show at Hi-Lo Press and a group exhibition at The Gallery by Wish.



Image Credit: Frankie Toan, *Queer Gardens*. 2023. Photography credit Raymundo Munoz.

## Project Spaces

Curated by [Erika Diamond](#)

[Frankie Toan](#) | Sliver Space

[Liz Williams](#) | Lecture Hall

[Sebastian Duncan-Portuondo](#) | Chute

Erika Diamond's recent personal art and curatorial practice have focused on queer and trans communities and care; themes she brings to Atlanta Contemporary's Project Spaces this summer.

## About Erika Diamond

Erika Diamond is a textile-focused artist, curator, and educator based in Asheville, NC. Born in Germany to two ballet dancers, she grew up backstage and touring across Europe in her adolescence. This gave her early insight into the ephemeral nature of touch, the expressive qualities of the body, and the transformative capabilities of costume. In 2000, she earned a degree in Sculpture at RISD, experimenting

**FREE ADMISSION  
EVERY DAY**

**Tue–Sat** 12pm–5pm

**Thu** 12–8pm

**Sun** 12pm–4pm

**Mon** Closed

535 Means St. NW

Atlanta, GA 30318

404-688-1970

[support@atlantacontemporary.org](mailto:support@atlantacontemporary.org)

[atlantacontemporary.org](http://atlantacontemporary.org)

# ATLANTA CONTEMPORARY

Changing the way we all see art.

with bronze, honey, performance, and chocolate. For the next 12 years she maintained a studio practice while working as a freelance artist assistant and art preparator in NYC, Los Angeles, and Charlotte. She was the sole proprietor of a specialty chocolate company from 2004-2010.

Diamond received her MFA in Fibers from the Craft/Material Studies department at VCU where she learned how to weave tapestry, commemorate her physical encounters through objects, and identified her preoccupation with mortality. Since then, she has lived nomadically, making her own work and teaching textile classes in Richmond, Milwaukee, Denver, NYC, and Penland. Several residencies and grants have facilitated her recent projects focusing on the politics of queer safety and visibility. Most recently, she has exhibited at Dinner Gallery, Form & Concept Gallery, Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, and Contemporary Craft in Pittsburgh. She has been reviewed in Metalsmith Magazine, Glasstire, and Whitehot Magazine. In the summers, as Associate Director of Galleries at Chautauqua Institution, she curates and manages exhibitions that blur distinctions between the genres of art, design, and craft.

*Additional information on Project Spaces forthcoming.*

## **About Atlanta Contemporary**

Atlanta Contemporary engages the public through the creation, presentation and advancement of contemporary art. Founded in 1973 as Nexus, a grassroots artists' cooperative, Atlanta Contemporary has since become one of the southeast's leading contemporary art centers. We play a vital role in Atlanta's cultural landscape by presenting over 45 exhibitions throughout the year, featuring consequential artists from the local, national, and international art scenes. We are one of the few local institutions that commissions new works by artists, paying particular attention to artists of note who have not had a significant exhibition in the Southeast. We organize 90+ diverse educational offerings annually, unrivaled by other local organizations of our size. We are the only local organization to provide on-site subsidized studio space to working artists through our Studio Artist Program, removing cost as a barrier to the creative process. Visit [atlantacontemporary.org](http://atlantacontemporary.org) to learn more.

### **FREE ADMISSION EVERY DAY**

**Tue–Sat** 12pm–5pm  
**Thu** 12–8pm  
**Sun** 12pm–4pm  
**Mon** Closed

535 Means St. NW  
Atlanta, GA 30318  
404-688-1970

[support@atlantacontemporary.org](mailto:support@atlantacontemporary.org)  
[atlantacontemporary.org](http://atlantacontemporary.org)

# ATLANTA CONTEMPORARY

Changing the way we all see art.



*The 50th Anniversary  
exhibitions are presented by  
the Forward Arts Foundation.*

*Atlanta Contemporary and  
Veronica L. Hogan would like  
to give special thanks to all of  
the collectors who have  
generously offered to loan  
their works for this exhibition.*

All press inquiries, contact:  
Emma Blessing, Visitor Experience and Exhibitions Manager  
[emma@atlantacontemporary.org](mailto:emma@atlantacontemporary.org)

**FREE ADMISSION  
EVERY DAY**

**Tue-Sat** 12pm – 5pm

**Thu** 12-8pm

**Sun** 12pm-4pm

**Mon** Closed

535 Means St. NW

Atlanta, GA 30318

404-688-1970

[support@atlantacontemporary.org](mailto:support@atlantacontemporary.org)

[atlantacontemporary.org](http://atlantacontemporary.org)