



***Reggie Burrows Hodges***  
January 8—March 14, 2021  
Karma  
188 & 172 East 2nd Street  
New York NY 10009

Karma is pleased to present the first New York solo exhibition of Reggie Burrows Hodges.

Hodges creates paintings centered on the human form, imbuing his subjects with the mystery and significance of remembered scenes or recollected stories. Hodges begins a painting by laying down a matte black ground, circumscribing the contours of his figures in passages of acrylic and pastel. Leaving the faces and other individualizing features of his silhouetted subjects largely undefined, they emerge through the hazy, soft-focus environments that Hodges builds from the ground up with painterly brushwork in luminous palettes. Some of Hodges' protagonists are physically active while others exert themselves through attentive contemplation, conveying a feeling of cinematic drama realized through his uniquely painted vision.

In *On Your Mark: Lean In* athletes run and hurdle through space while in *Community Concern* a dancer is represented mid-step, composed to convey tremendous energy, poise, and grace. These paintings feature the beauty and skill of physical achievement while foregrounding issues around the spectacle of sports and our regard for pursuits of greatness. Other paintings focus not on the athletes but on the volunteers who perform acts of service and play a vital but often overlooked role within the communities brought together by these competitions.

In the *On the Verge* paintings, a lone figure on a unicycle enacts dramas of balance—both physiological and compositional. Requiring tremendous skill and constant motion to ride, the unicyclist in these works serves as a metaphor for the complexity of navigating the world with attention and immediacy. Traversing through varied environments, each canvas in the series suggests different stages of a metaphorical journey.

In contrast to the active motion of Hodges' other subjects in the exhibition, the *Seated Listener* paintings represent individuals who are still and centered, actively engaged in listening. Rooted in attentive contemplation of what may be music, conversation, or storytelling, the listeners represent, Hodges states, "the presence of a human being offering you its full attention."

Hilton Als observes that the figures created by Hodges "are made sharper, and more haunting, not because we see those things in their eyes, we see it in their bodies, their postures, the endless desire for humans not to be alone, and to connect. To that Hodges adds all that wonderful blackness." Blackness in Hodges' paintings operates on the level of form as well as a visual metaphor, opening up questions of identity within his explorations of representation, presence, and our relationships with the physical and cultural spaces we occupy. Hodges' works benefit from close, careful looking, one that reveals conceptual relationships between recollection and reality; between people and systems they inhabit; between juxtaposed swatches of color.

Karma's fully illustrated catalogue for the exhibition will feature an essay by Hilton Als, and an interview between the artist and Suzette McAvoy, Executive Director at the Center for Maine Contemporary Art. Als explores the energy, discipline, and expression in Hodges' paintings and the implications of his use of color. With McAvoy, Hodges discusses his work and how he has drawn inspiration from Maine's art community and the legacy of modern and contemporary painters who have made the state their home, including Winslow Homer, Marsden Hartley, Alex Katz, Lois Dodd, and David Driskell.

Born in Compton, California in 1965, Reggie Burrows Hodges lives and works in Lewiston, Maine. He is a 2020 recipient of the annual Joan Mitchell Painters & Sculptors Grant. As the 2019 recipient of the Ellis-Beauregard Foundation Fellowship in the Visual Arts, Hodges will be the subject of a solo exhibition at the Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockland, Maine in 2022.