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New Ideal

Paul Anagnostopoulos, MK Bailey, Damon Davis, Matthew Harris,

Delphine Hennelly, Mildred Howard, James William Murray

Curated by Sarah Martin

January 22 – March 6, 2021

(Denver, CO) RULE Gallery is pleased to present *New Ideal*, a group exhibition curated by Sarah Martin held at our Denver location at 808 Santa Fe Drive. A timed-entry reception will be held Friday, January 22, from 5-8p and the show will be on view to the public from January 22 - March 6, 2021. Gallery hours are Tues - Friday 12-6p, Sat 12-5p with CDC COVID-19 guidelines in place.

Throughout the history of western art, a small, privileged group of art critics, collectors and connoisseurs held the power to decide what was considered exceptional. Parallel to that, artists used or referenced the celebrated work of those who came before to scrutinize and critique the system. The artwork presented in this exhibition performs the same action and, as more diverse voices have entered the conversation, suggest an alternative to the tradition and the emergence of a new ideal.

The presence of queer imagery in ancient Greek and Roman art is apparent in work by Paul Anagnostopoulos and James William Murray. Anagnostopoulos' paintings consider mythological desire and queer melancholy by taking "Images of the Hero" from that time, instilling sensitivity and humanity into these divine masculine figures. Murray's work also explores gender and sexuality issues in the 21st Century, introducing questions of queer touch, desire, materiality, and spatial dynamics between bodies, art-objects, and architectures. By roughly casting his fingertips and wrist in plaster, he emphasizes the intimacy of objects over their grandeur and reveres the material's unattainable perfection.

Damon Davis and Matthew Harris also question the history of classical sculpture and the notions of impersonating perfection. Harris considers how we present our image to the world, which today may mean a perfectly edited selfie, and during the Baroque meant an idealized figure. Instead of smoothing away, Harris' focuses on excessive build-up, highlighting flaws providing a rawer interpretation of the portrait. Davis's concrete busts further question idealization and masculinity by fracturing his likeness to expose emotional vulnerability. The inevitable growth that stems from trauma is represented as gemstones embedded in the final work.

For much of art history, women were depicted as objects reclining on sofas and poised in fine clothing or jewels, a practice challenged by MK Bailey and Delphine Hennelly. In Bailey's images, created during COVID, classical women lean in front of laptops or socially distance in the park while maintaining their traditional poses. While in her work, Hennelly references 'Death and the Maiden' paintings that appeared in the Renaissance following the plague. These sexualized versions of a memento mori compare life to the sweetness and shortness of a woman's youth. In Hennelly's modern interpretation, the maidens toy with death and acknowledge its presence without fear.

Finally, in Mildred Howard's *Casanova Assignations* series, she uses printmaking and collage to combine images from Casanova's 18th-century autobiography to dispute the power of a man whose name has been synonymous with seduction and sexual power for centuries. Howard's work addresses the way powerful men's sexual transgressions further their capability to dominate and isolate groups of people as "others."



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Paul Anagnostopoulos (b. 1991) graduated Summa Cum Laude from New York University in 2013 with a BFA, concentrating in Drawing and Printmaking. His work is in the collection of the MOMA Archives and Library, the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, and Yale University. He is pursuing his MFA at Hunter College.

MK Bailey (b. 1994) is an artist living and working in Washington, D.C. She received her BA from the University of Virginia in 2016 and has shown throughout the east coast, including the Institute of Contemporary Art, Baltimore, MD.

Damon Davis (b. 1985) is a post-disciplinary artist who works and resides in St. Louis, MO. Davis is the Co-Director of the acclaimed documentary *Whose Streets?*, chronicling the Ferguson rebellion of 2014. His work is in the collection at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture, St Louis Art Museum, and the Beach Museum of Art, KSU, among others. Davis was featured on the PBS series *American Masters* in 2020.

Matthew Harris (b. 1981) received his MFA at the Univ. of CO, Boulder (2011) and is the head of Fine Arts at the RMCaD in Denver, CO. Harris has exhibited throughout the US including exhibitions at BMoCa, Boulder, CO, GOCA, Colorado Springs, CO, Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL, among others. He has shown internationally in Germany and China.

Delphine Hennelly (b. 1979) received a BFA from Cooper Union (2002) and an MFA from Mason Gross School of Visual Arts, Rutgers (2017). Hennelly has exhibited across the U.S. and Canada exhibitions in New York, Los Angeles, Montreal, and Vienna, among others. Hennelly is a three-time recipient of the Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Award.

Mildred Howard (b. 1945) has an impressive career spanning the last three decades. In 2015, she received the Lee Krasner Award in recognition of a lifetime of artistic achievement. She has also been the recipient of the Nancy Graves Grant for Visual Artists (2017), the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award (2004/5), a fellowship from the California Arts Council (2003), the Adaline Kent Award from San Francisco Art Institute (1991), and received the Douglas G. MacAgy Distinguished Achievement Award at San Francisco Art Institute (2018). Her works reside in the permanent collections of: the Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA; the de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA; LACMA, Los Angeles, CA; the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego, CA; the Museum of Glass and Contemporary Art, Tacoma, WA; the Oakland Museum, Oakland, CA; SFMOMA, San Francisco, CA; and the San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA, and others.

James William Murray (b. 1988) lives and works in Brighton, UK. He received an MA in photography from the Univ. of Brighton in 2015 and has exhibited in the UK and internationally. His work is in the collection of the Hellenic Centre For Photography and private collections throughout Europe. In 2018 he was selected for the Sussex Open Commission to produce new work and in 2019 was selected for a residency at Towner Gallery UK.

RULE Gallery, founded in 1991, has locations in Denver, CO, and Marfa, TX. RULE represents emerging and mid-career contemporary artists and artist estates, with a focus on fostering investigative art practices while developing artists' long-term careers. Outside their robust in-house exhibition schedule, RULE coordinates programming in prominent institutions and non-traditional settings, expanding community engagement with the work. In addition, the gallery actively endeavors to bring greater recognition of the region's historic art movements to a broader audience. For more information, [visitwww.rulegallery.com](http://www.rulegallery.com)