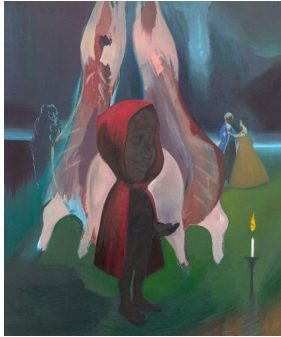


# M+B

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



## KENRICK MCFARLANE *Naked & Famous*

December 11, 2021 – January 22, 2022

### Opening Reception

Saturday, December 11, 2021 from 5 to 7 pm  
612 N Almont Drive, Los Angeles

**M+B** is pleased to present *Naked & Famous* by Kenrick McFarlane. This is the artist's first solo show with the gallery and runs from December 11, 2021 – January 22, 2022 with an opening reception on Saturday, December 11 from 5 to 7 pm at our Almont location.

*"To be naked is to be oneself. To be nude is to be seen naked by others and yet not recognized for oneself."*  
- John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*

Kenrick McFarlane's paintings dwell in moments of tense contradiction, negotiating the gaps between the private and public self, vulgarity and beauty. They propose open-ended questions: how do we reconcile a longing for embrace, for an intimacy which can only exist behind closed doors, with the fear of exposing oneself to another, sagging flesh and body structure laid bare? What is the price of performing a public persona, these paintings croon, what is the cost of recognition? In *Naked & Famous*, Kenrick McFarlane applies these competing impulses to the topics of interracial sexuality and Black male cultural producers, courting both desire and anxiety. McFarlane meditates in the indeterminacy of history, allowing each painting to explore the contours between intimacy and taboo, individual fame and collective experience.

McFarlane's paintings exude a psychological intensity. Wide-eyed gazes disrupt swirls of miasmic color; faces are obscured by wisping masks, as if each figure is caught in a dreamlike stream of consciousness. Even at their most erotically charged, McFarlane's works foreground emotional complexity over visual arousal. Bare-chested women idly paint in the corners of expansive rooms, caught in contemplative repose. Intimacy, in these works, is a vehicle for examining the hidden depths of each figure's private longing. McFarlane's figures are naked for their own gratification, not nude for the viewer's consumption.

The figures represented in McFarlane's paintings are not artistic subjects. They refuse to be reduced to objectifying representation, retaining certain details for themselves: faces disappear into abstract blurs, features are interrupted by intrusive shapes, whole figures are even, in some instances, redacted, diminished to colorful imprints which merely imply a presence. McFarlane's figures thus negotiate with the viewer, throwing up limits around how much we are allowed to witness, challenging our sense of entitlement to detail. They demand a leap of faith from the viewer, asking us to accept their opacity, to trust that their lack of disclosure is somehow integral to their self-preservation.

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McFarlane's paintings, in the final sense, are love letters. McFarlane communes with his subjects, allowing them to retain the mysterious allure of private life, granting them a dignified grace not often found in the spectacle of celebrity. McFarlane passionately converses with the creative histories with which he paints through, which stretch from German Expressionism to Francis Bacon and John Currin to trap, stripping his library of influence naked before them. His paintings are not the distanced observations of a documentarian, but rather painterly extrapolations marked by a sense of personal implication – McFarlane lives within these same registers, working as a Black artist, conversing with art history, navigating complex sexual climates. In pondering the psychological depths, exposures, and obfuscations of his figures, McFarlane offers his own hand in an act of intimate recognition, as if to say, "I'm with you."

**Kenrick McFarlane** (b. 1990, Chicago) received his BFA from the School of Art Institute of Chicago and studied in the MFA program at University of California, Los Angeles. McFarlane had his debut solo show, *Face Off*, at the Gene Siskel Film Center in Chicago and has since exhibited across the U.S. and South Africa. In 2012, McFarlane was selected by Kerry James Marshall to participate in the exhibition *Eclectic Coherence*, curated by Dawoud Bey, at Expo Chicago. McFarlane's work was most recently exhibited as a part of *Shattered Glass* at Jeffrey Deitch Gallery in Los Angeles. Kenrick McFarlane lives and works in Los Angeles. [@kenrickmcfarlaneart](https://www.instagram.com/kenrickmcfarlaneart)

Location:	<b>M+B</b> , 612 North Almont Drive, Los Angeles, California 90069
Show Title:	<i>Kenrick McFarlane: Naked &amp; Famous</i>
Exhibition Dates:	December 11, 2021 – January 22, 2022
Opening Reception:	Saturday, December 11, 5 – 7 pm
Gallery Hours:	Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm, and by appointment
Social Media:	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/mblosangeles">@mblosangeles</a> <a href="https://www.instagram.com/kenrickmcfarlaneart">@kenrickmcfarlaneart</a>

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