

# CUE

137 West 25th Street, New York, NY 10001

Phone: 212-206-3583

Gallery Hours: Wed–Sat, 12–6 pm

Web: [www.cueartfoundation.org](http://www.cueartfoundation.org) | Social: @cueart

Contact: [press@cueartfoundation.org](mailto:press@cueartfoundation.org)

## this must be the place to be rod jones ii

Mentored by Didier William

November 3rd, 2022–January 7th, 2023



rod jones ii, *untitled*, 2022. Resourced fabric, polyfil, waxed linen thread, leather.  
Approximate dimensions 60 in x 42 in x 50 in. Photo courtesy the artist.

**New York, NY –** CUE Art Foundation is pleased to present *this must be the place to be*, a solo exhibition by Philadelphia-based artist **rod jones ii**, with mentorship from **Didier William**. The exhibition, at CUE's gallery space (137 W. 25th Street), is rod jones's first solo show. The show will be on view from November 3rd until December 17th, 2022, and will open again from January 3rd–7th, 2023. Attendance during gallery hours (Wed–Sat, 12–6 pm) is free; no reservations are required.

### About the Exhibition

*this must be the place to be* is a solo exhibition by Philadelphia-based artist rod jones ii, with mentorship from Didier William. The exhibition presents new work that builds upon jones's ongoing mixed-media practice, and that draws from his experiences growing up in his mother's beauty salon. Using materials such as resourced fabric, synthetic hair, glass and acrylic beads, and dental floss, jones makes soft sculpture dolls he calls "homies" and constructs an installation—a world—that holds them.

"Why is it so difficult to call to mind representations of tenderness?" asks exhibition mentor Didier William. "As a child, jones bore witness to [a] meditative choreography of tenderness practiced and performed in real-time. He experienced a transformative liberation and joy offered by his mother's tender care for Black

beauty.” These formative memories of space—imbued with intangible moments of intimacy and fulfillment—remain present in Jones’s work in ways that feel both familiar and inaccessible at once. The “homies” are materially recognizable; made of common household and beauty supplies, they sit, stand, and are held by hands that cradle them from the walls. And yet, their forms and personhood are impossible to characterize. The space that Jones has created is for them; as viewers, we are simply visitors in their universe.

In his first solo exhibition in a gallery space, it is clear that Jones is invested in a different kind of placemaking, a kind that asks questions rather than proposing answers. What does it mean to make intentional space? How do we hold—and how are we held by—the places we move through? Who are we in relation to what—or who—surrounds us? What does it feel like to be accepted and to be present, to be embraced and to belong?

In *this must be the place to be*, Jones conceives of what catalogue essayist Logan Cryer calls an “inverted realm.” Exemplifying a new genre of art practice that Cryer coins as “Black Queer Vernacular Craft,” he “plays with the humility embedded in entering an unfamiliar cultural space... Jones’s experience of moving through belonging and unfamiliarity has led him to create an empathetic world of uncommon folk. His prolific practice is just at the start.”

Read more about the exhibition at [www.cueartfoundation.org](http://www.cueartfoundation.org).



### About the Artist

rod jones ii (b. 1994) is a multidisciplinary artist from Gary, Indiana living and working in Philadelphia, PA. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Printmaking from Truman State University, and a Master of Fine Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Art from the Pennsylvania Academy. He has shown work at InLiquid Gallery (Philadelphia, PA), Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (Philadelphia, PA), Woodmere Museum of Art (Philadelphia, PA), Truman State University (Kirksville, MO), Tiger Strikes Asteroid (Philadelphia, PA) and Anna Zorina Gallery (New York, NY). His work has also been collected by The Woodmere Museum of Art. He is currently an adjunct professor of Printmaking and Drawing at the University of Pennsylvania and Moore College of Art, and has lectured at Tyler School of Art at Temple University, Pace University, William Paterson University, and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

### About the Mentor

Didier William is originally from Port-au-Prince, Haiti. He earned a BFA in painting from The Maryland Institute College of Art and an MFA in Painting and Printmaking from Yale University School of Art. His work has been exhibited at the Bronx Museum of Art (New York, NY), The Museum of Latin American Art (Long Beach, CA), The Museum at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (Philadelphia, PA), The Carnegie Museum (Pittsburgh, PA), Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art (Bentonville, AR), and The Figge Museum Art Museum (Davenport, IA). He is represented by James Fuentes Gallery in New York and M+B Gallery in Los Angeles.

William was an artist-in-residence at the Marie Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation in Brooklyn, NY. He has also been a recipient of the Rosenthal Family Foundation Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2018), the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grants (2020), and a Pew Fellowship from the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage (2021). He has taught at several institutions, including Yale School of Art, Vassar College, Columbia University, University of Pennsylvania, and SUNY Purchase. William is currently Assistant Professor of Expanded Print at Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University.

### Exhibition Credits

*this must be the place to be* by rod jones ii, mentored by Didier William. Graphic design by Studio Ercan-Li. Catalogue essay by Logan Cryer, mentored by Serubiri Moses. Presented by CUE Art Foundation, 2022.

### About CUE Art Foundation

CUE Art Foundation is a nonprofit organization that works with and for emerging and underrecognized artists and art workers to create new opportunities and present varied perspectives in the arts. Through our gallery space and public programs, we foster the development of thought-provoking exhibitions and events, create avenues for mentorship, cultivate relationships amongst peers and the public, and facilitate the exchange of ideas. For more information about CUE, visit [www.cueartfoundation.org](http://www.cueartfoundation.org).

### Support

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