

moniquemeloche

451 N Paulina Street, Chicago 60622
312 243 2129 moniquemeloche.com

February James: *We Laugh Loud So The Spirits Can Hear* July 11 - August 22, 2020

moniquemeloche gallery is thrilled to announce tandem solo presentation of new works from artists **Chase Hall** and **February James**. Faced with navigating the new challenges introduced by the global pandemic, both Hall and James were offered a new entry point for intimate self-reflection, memorialized in these new bodies of work.

February James is a self-taught artist whose work is rooted deeply in autobiographical narrative, exploring the factors that influence identity formation and the human condition to expose the hidden emotions that exist between what we see and what we experience. Compelled by what she describes as the broken places, James meditates less on the physicality of her figures, instead aiming to capture their true psychological essence. Devoid of formal construct, each smeared, distorted, and seemingly hollow portrait is equipped with a confronting gaze that brings viewers to the nexus between the authentic self and the conflicted self. *We Laugh Loud So The Spirits Can Hear* represents an intuitive shift through which James developed soft portraits, evocative of family members and familiar figures whose memory offers a sense of sanctuary and comfort. Segmented lines serve as linguistic tools that offer space for a deeper exploration of fragmentation within the human psyche, while a daring color palette of deep maroons conjures the sensation of life, blood pulsing through the veins. Each portrait feels like a memory charged with the oral histories and lessons their subjects passed along, while considering how truth is conditioned by the frameworks through which it is received. More specifically how our family legacies influence our everyday life, vulnerabilities, expectations, and experiences, and how we can achieve a sense of harmony with these inherited pathologies.

While varied in their methodologies, each artist's propensity for exploring the figure enriches the recent dialogues around identity, family history, and the human condition. It is through this deeper understanding of the inheritances of our past and their resonance that we arrive at new insights and avenues of reflection.