

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**MARCUS KENNEY'S**

# **DESOLATION ROW**

**On View: April 4 - June 10, 2023**

**Reception with the artist and special guests: April 14th, 7-10pm**

Laney Contemporary is pleased to announce *Desolation Row*, a solo exhibition of new paintings and a video-based sculptural installation by Savannah-based Marcus Kenney. This is Kenney's second solo show at Laney Contemporary and his first solo exhibition in Savannah in five years.

Bob Dylan's song *Desolation Row* portrays an epic series of vignettes of 1960s America. Vivid and acerbic, it suggests and encounters without moralizing. Kenney's brave body of work borrows Dylan's title, producing a kaleidoscopic vision that confronts the ugliness of humanity that exists today: our sadness, our tragedies, and our desires.

The iconography of Kenney's *Desolation Row* sits comfortably among the faces of Goya and Bosch. The paintings establish a parade of characters, raucous, abject, and dangerous, each more odd and unusual than the next. His giddy use of color and simplicity of form belie a deeper tragic longing for civility and the difficulty of existing in a world that we desperately

want to believe in. Everywhere, ignorance runs amok, yet there are still signs of hope and possibility.

Dylan's *Desolation Row* has been called a folk song of the absurd. Kenney's paintings inhabit a similar space, confronting all that stares out at us, all that mirrors our times: the true, the violent, and the raw. It's both of the 1960s and of today, timeless in its circus of humanity. Like Dylan's lyrics, the paintings ask for an interpretive openness. The difficulties of being human, whilst maintaining compassion in our age of global crisis, and rampant self-indulgent behavior is at the heart of this fearless work. The paintings do not tell us what to think; they are more demanding. They require us *to think*.

**Bio:**

Marcus Kenney (b. 1972) was born and raised in rural Louisiana and lives and works in Savannah, Georgia. Kenney earned an M.F.A. in photography from the Savannah College of Art and Design. He works in many mediums, including sculpture, painting, photography and neon.

Kenney's narrative works present a tumultuous clash of imagery reflecting America's melting pot of culture, considering issues including consumerism, environmentalism, religion, mortality, identity, race relations, and authority. Kenney has exhibited in museums, institutions, galleries and art fairs internationally, including Tel Aviv, Paris, London, Montréal, New York, Boston, Chicago, Kansas City, St. Louis, Minneapolis, Miami and Portland, Oregon. His work has been featured and reviewed in *Art in America*, *New American Painting*, *Artpapers*, *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *ArtVoices*, *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, *New York Art Magazine*, and *Art News*.

**Reception details:**

Our reception for Marcus Kenney will take place on Friday, April 14th from 7 to 10pm with Nom Nom Poké food truck on premises. Special artists & guests will perform during the reception.

Video installations on the lawn by:

LXXX YOU with Atlanta artists George Long and Mike Stasny

John Collette

Kevin Kirkwood

Michael Mikulec

Jameid Ferrin

As well as:

DJ set by Extremely Michael and Sloppy George

Charles Schwab of Offal Labs and Dumpster Edition will be live-printing unique Marcus Kenney designed t-shirts available for purchase.

Tarot readings by Dame Darcy

Acoustic guitar by Stewart Marshall

**Gallery hours and contact information:**

Tuesday - Friday, 11-5 pm

Saturday, 11-2 pm

and by appointment

Phone: (912) 438-4442

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Image above:

Marcus Kenney

*riot squad*, 2023

oil on canvas

72 x 60 in