

HOLLIS TAGGART

Hollis Taggart Presents Dana James' Most Ambitious Work to Date in *Pearls & Potions*, On View October 12 – November 11, 2023

September 20, 2023 – Hollis Taggart is pleased to present *Pearls & Potions*, the New York City-based artist Dana James' second solo show with the gallery. In her latest body of work, James expands her skillful exploration of light in abstract compositions that demonstrate the artist's continued interest in dualities and contradiction. *Pearls & Potions* features some of James' most ambitious paintings to date, in which she expands her shimmering and pastel palette across larger-scale, multi-paneled canvases that allow for an unprecedented experience of her distinctive visual language. Applying her signature palette and brushwork to crescent-shaped canvases for the first time, James' newest work becomes almost sculptural, with her mark making echoed and enhanced by the curvature of the canvases. *Pearls & Potions* will be on view on the first floor of Hollis Taggart from October 12 through November 11, 2023, with an opening reception on Thursday, October 12th, from 5-8PM.

Dana James' (b. 1986) practice is driven by an exploration of contrasts and the artist's fascination with the liminal space between traditionally accepted dualities. Collapsing conventional ideas of beauty, femininity, and lightness, James is interested in visually probing what occurs at the edges of such concepts. Initially appearing bright and airy, closer viewing of James' paintings reveals a deep complexity that is enhanced by her use of recycled canvas and multiple textures created through diverse materials including pigment, tarp, encaustic wax, acrylic, oil, foil, and Japanese papers. The resulting works embrace the contradictions that shape us and the world around us, challenging the perceived dichotomies between darkness and light, control and chaos, and past and present.

In James' latest body of work, straight lines and contours appear within amorphous pools of color, at times punctuated by painterly marks that suggest lunar shapes. The artist's process is fluid and meditative: she adds and subtracts layers, creating and then erasing or blurring marks. For James, this process is akin to the transience of existence, with some layers and marks vanishing beneath others just as some memories and emotions recede into the background over time. There is a nostalgia embedded in James' canvases, with their color schemes and titles often referencing shows like Sailor Moon and other female princess and warrior-themed stories of the artist's youth.

Pearls & Potions includes one of James' largest works to date, *Astronomical Dawn (At the Drive In)*, a multi-panel painting referencing the moment the sun starts lightening the sky though it is still beneath the horizon. With nebulous pastel color fields and multiple possible horizon lines blurring together across uneven panels, *Astronomical Dawn* is an enchanting and luminescent contemplation of a moment of transition and metamorphosis.

Of her practice, James writes, "Large fields of smooth colour are offset by a flurry of mark making. These marks are akin to scars on otherwise flawless skin, diaphanous but permanent, heavy with history. Important to my process is creating selective moments of shifting light in each piece. It's a literal glow created by varied treatments and iridescent pigment, summoning the glinting of the ocean, the magic felt in the vastness of nature as a child, and the flashing of color just before drifting into sleep."

James was born in New York City, where she is currently based. She graduated from the School of Visual Arts in 2008 and has since had her paintings featured in numerous solo, two-person, and group exhibitions in the US and abroad. James has had solo shows at Hollis Taggart Contemporary, New York; Bode Projects, Berlin; and The Lodge Gallery, New York. Her 2017 solo show *Sometimes*

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Seen Dreams was selected as a featured exhibit for the *Art Critical Review* Panel discussion series. In 2020, *Daily Collector* featured James in the article "Top 20 Artists Shaping the New Decade." In 2023, James was featured as a "Trending Artist" on *Artsy*. Her paintings are held in many private and public collections, including UBS Art Collection and Gibson & Dunn. James is represented by Hollis Taggart Contemporary in New York and Bode Projects in Berlin.

About Hollis Taggart

Founded in 1979, Hollis Taggart presents significant works of American art, showcasing the trajectory of American art movements from the Hudson River School to American Modernism and the Post-War and Contemporary eras. Its program is characterized by a deep commitment to scholarship and bringing to the fore the work of under-recognized artists. The gallery has sponsored several catalogue raisonné projects, most recently for the American Surrealist artist Kay Sage, and has been instrumental in advancing knowledge of such artists as Alfred Maurer, Arthur B. Carles, and more recently, Theodoros Stamos, Marjorie Strider, and Michael (Corinne) West. In the summer of 2019, the gallery announced the formal expansion of its primary market business and focus on the presentation of contemporary work. It continues to expand its roster of contemporary artists, focusing on emerging and mid-career talents. With more than 40 years of experience, Hollis Taggart is widely recognized by collectors and curators for its leadership, expertise, and openness, on matters of art history, market trends and opportunities.

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