

Press Release

**Charlie James | Royale Projects
Expo Chicago
September 27-30, 2018
Navy Pier – Chicago**

For Expo Chicago 2018, Charlie James and Royale Projects are collaborating on an exhibition that displays a zeitgeist of artists who are, in numbers, speaking up against societal norms that plague the phrase “equality for all”. They examined their programs and found strength in seven artists that are interconnected cross-generationally through their practice and ideals, who illuminate the power of voices and whose voices need to be heard.

Through art historical references, subcultural cues and glitter Sadie Barnette (Charlie James), Alejandro Diaz (Royale Projects), Ramiro Gomez (Charlie James), Karen Lofgren (Royale Projects), Patrick Martinez (Charlie James), Gabriella Sanchez (Charlie James), and Rubén Ortiz Torres (Royale Projects) all confront pressing social and political issues. Each artist surfaces systematic forms of oppression regarding racism, classism, and sexism. Whether in the form of painting, sculpture, or neon, these works express counter-ideas aiming to expose faults in contemporary society that are deeply rooted in the history of our nation.

Transforming the mundane into the spectacular, Sadie Barnette explores identity construction through text, subcultural codes, family photographs and found objects that are elevated to hypnotic nostalgia combining minimalism with density and celebration with resistance.

References from Symbolism, to Dada, to Mexican and German Modernism, to Pop Art and Folk Art unfold in Alejandro Diaz’s light-hearted paintings. Capturing the emotional essences of art histories icons, the artist reveals boundaries of class and race while empowering his Mexican-American culture through humble materials and common household items.

In his paintings, works on paper, or cardboard figures, Gomez alters familiar narratives by making visible the invisible labor forces that upkeep Los Angeles’ pristine appearance and support lifestyles of luxury.

Lofgren’s conceptually motivated practice focuses on cultural anxieties and ritualistic behavior in contemporary and ancient times with reverence for process and material. From a decolonial and feminist perspective, the artist dissects the history of power and controlled knowledge through the lens of cultural and other wild systems.

A native Angelino, Martinez’s work examines the city through his diverse cultural background of Filipino, Mexican, and Native American descent. Using the same marketing techniques of mom-and-pop liquor stores, restaurants, barber shops and other locally-owned businesses, the artist raises awareness of ongoing struggles of inequality with works in neon.

Influenced by her previous career as a freelance graphic designer, Sanchez’s electrifying canvases use typography and iconography to express the duality of her cultural background as Mexican-American. Bold flat renderings of familiar objects and words within fields of color exhibit the artists exploration of how language and imagery signify and create meaning.

An innovator of postmodernism, Ortiz Torres examines cultural intersections and historical narratives, combining lowrider culture with minimalism. Using car paint and candy flake, he transforms aluminum panels, shopping carts, recycled car hoods and doors into provocative art pieces.

Additionally, for Expo Chicago 2018 Royale Projects will be presenting a special project of Ewerdt Hilgemann's latest body of work that compliments the industrial cityscape of Chicago, IL. Hilgemann meticulously crafts stainless steel geometric forms only to be imploded by the artist vacuuming the air from their interiors. Studying the magnificent forces of nature, he became fascinated with the power and brute force of air, an element that is congruently soft, ephemeral, and vital to human existence. For the artists series 'Butterflies', the chemical process of oxidation creates the effect of fluttering butterfly wings. As the viewer interacts with the sculptures, light exposure reveals the brilliant rainbow-palette and shimmering, iridescent scales of these majestic insects. Hilgemann is widely recognized for his evacuated air works that are part of public installations around the world including *Habakuk (Homage to Max Ernst)* installed at Chicago University Campus, Chicago, IL.

About Charlie James

Charlie James Gallery was founded in 2008. The gallery is known for discovering emerging artist and bringing them to an international audience. It has a strong concept-driven roster that embraces all artistic media. Works by the gallery's artists have been acquired by museums such as LACMA, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, the Orange County Museum of Art, the Crocker Art Museum, and others. The gallery has participated in many art fairs including EXPO Chicago, Paris Photo LA, Zona Maco (Mexico City), Art Toronto, and Dallas Art Fair. Charlie James founded the gallery after a 12-year career in telecommunications, consulting and software product management was productively detoured by art collecting. The gallery is located on Chung King Road in the Chinatown Arts District of Los Angeles.

About Royale Projects

Royale Projects, established in 2008, focuses on the history and continuing advancement of abstraction in painting and sculpture, as well as on leading edge artists who find their roots in Conceptualism. Royale Projects maintains a rigorous schedule of solo and group exhibitions as well as site-responsive projects. The gallery debuted previously unseen works by Helen Pashgian, one of the innovators of the California Light & Space movement, and had the honor of presenting the last new works by Dennis Oppenheim. Royale Projects collaborated with Andrea Zittel's High Desert Test Sites to produce 'Trajectory Object c. 2000-2050' and the accompanying artist book by Karen Lofgren, as well as the career-defining project 'Lucid Stead' by Phillip K. Smith III, both in Joshua Tree, California. The downtown Los Angeles Arts District space opened with a survey exhibition of Ken Lum and was a participating gallery in The Getty's 'Pacific Standard Time: LA/LA', exhibiting new work by Ruben Ortiz Torres. Royale Projects recently began handling the estate of Clinton Hill (1922-2003), a lesser known member of the New York School. Contributing to the reappraisal of the artist as an important voice in American abstraction, the gallery debuted previously unseen works from the 1960s at The Frieze Art Fair in New York.