

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

# FRIEZE



Danielle Mckinney, *The Companion*, 2024, oil on linen, 61 x 76.2 cm

Courtesy: © Danielle Mckinney and Galerie Max Hetzler Berlin | Paris | London | Marfa; photograph: Pierre le Hors

## MUST-SEE: DANIELLE MCKINNEY PRIORITIZES STILLNESS

BY CHARLES MOORE

September 25, 2024

In 'Haven', Danielle Mckinney's first solo exhibition in Berlin, the New Jersey-based artist finds new possibilities in spaces of rest and intimacy, reimagining them not only as personal retreats, but as arenas for larger cultural discourse. Mckinney is known for her stunning oil on linen works depicting Black women in repose; here at Galerie Max Hetzler her use of Old Holland paints, rich in pigments, helps to establish the depth and luminosity of the works. Mckinney builds her figures first, letting their presence dictate the mood of the scene, before adding interiors that compliment the emotional tenor of her subjects. The subtle glow of her figures emerges from the careful layering of tones, evoking both warmth and mystery.

Mckinney draws inspiration from unlikely places, including E. B. White's children's novel *Charlotte's Web* (1952) and Alfred Hitchcock's film *Rear Window* (1954), which she sees as an examination of voyeurism – a frequent theme in her artistic practice. Her focus on Black women in intimate, relaxed settings reclaims the agency of the historically marginalized and addresses the need for representation in spaces of quietude and introspection. In works such as *Secret Songbird* (2024), she deploys chiaroscuro with masterful restraint, allowing the figure to emerge from the darkness in a quiet assertion of autonomy. The floral backdrop subtly offsets the figure's solitude, creating a tension between interior decoration and the intimate, lived reality of rest. Similarly, *The Companion* (2024) manipulates light to build an unsettling contrast between the subject's serenity and the voyeuristic gaze it invites, evoking a delicate interplay between comfort and exposure.

While deeply personal, the works move beyond autobiography to tap into universal experiences of solitude and introspection. Mckinney's figures evoke a quiet resistance, finding in moments of stillness subtle acts of

empowerment. 'Haven' reminds us that rest is not only a physical state but a political one, where the act of being still, of reclaiming one's time, becomes a statement of self-possession and defiance.



Danielle Mckinney, *Afterglow*, 2024, oil on linen, 61 x 45.7 cm. Courtesy: © Danielle Mckinney and Galerie Max Hetzler Berlin | Paris | London | Marfa; photograph: Pierre le Hors

*Danielle Mckinney's 'Haven' is on view at Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin, until 26 October*