

Capitain Petzel

Rodney McMillian

In Other Realms

May 1 – June 13 2026

Capitain Petzel is pleased to announce Rodney McMillian's first solo exhibition with the gallery, coinciding with Gallery Weekend Berlin 2026. A press preview will take place on April 29 from 11 am to 3 pm.

Los Angeles–based artist Rodney McMillian (born 1969 in Columbia, South Carolina) is known for his multidisciplinary practice encompassing painting, sculpture, installation, performance, and text. His work often engages with themes of race and social inequality, drawing attention to overlooked materials and marginalized histories. McMillian frequently uses found objects such as blankets, tarps, and architectural fragments, transforming them into poignant statements on care, survival, and political resistance. Through his work, he challenges dominant narratives and invites viewers to reflect on the social structures that shape everyday life.

The exhibition is anchored by McMillian's recently completed film, based on a text by the American journalist and civil rights activist Ida B. Wells-Barnett. Wells-Barnett made a name for herself through her campaign against lynching. The speech quoted and performed by the artist in the film was originally delivered at the first annual conference of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) in 1909.

The surrounding works unfold in relation to this film. McMillian presents a group of new sculptures as well as paintings from his *Black Paintings* series, which are among his most well-known bodies of work. Their heavily worked surfaces are marked by folds, seams, and vivid colors. McMillian often uses unconventional materials such as vinyl or fabric, which he paints and manipulates so that their physical properties remain visible. Rather than functioning as mere supports, they appear structured, worn, and materially present. While these works enter into dialogue with the tradition of abstract painting – particularly with artists such as Ad Reinhardt – McMillian simultaneously challenges the notion of “pure” abstraction. His black paintings can be read politically, pointing to Black identity, visibility and invisibility, and thus broader social and historical power structures within both American society and art history. His work emerges like speculative fiction, imagining alternative possibilities beyond existing power structures through time travel, cosmic perspectives, and radical acts of imagination.

Rodney McMillian's work has been featured in major international exhibitions, most recently in the comprehensive retrospective *The Land: Not Without a Politic* at Marta Herford Museum, Germany, which brought together works from different phases of his practice and was accompanied by a catalogue. Two solo exhibitions are currently on view at the Columbia Museum of Art in South Carolina and the Henry Art Gallery Seattle. McMillian participated in the 2022 Whitney Biennial and has exhibited, among others, at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; MoMA PS1, New York; the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; the Studio Museum in Harlem; the Aspen Art Museum; and ICA Philadelphia.