

Benny Merris: *\_Benny BonTempo\_*  
4/30/18 — 5/20/18

Benny Merris makes paintings that are built with abundant color, rhythmic gradations, and architectonic torque. They oscillate between composed marks and wild abandon. His painting takes place indoors and outdoors, where he works on a variety of supports, including walls, natural objects, and his own body. These modes are symbiotic, open-ended, and greatly informed by one another. Together, they underscore the artist's deep interest in embodiment, mimesis, and Gestalt.

Cleopatra's is pleased to host Merris' first solo exhibition in New York. Titled after his nom de guerre, *Benny BonTempo* will feature new large-scale paintings, *Vitruvean Garbage Bags*, created on heavy-duty contractor bags. Merris' technique involves monoprinting acrylic paint onto a flexible surface (plastic on plastic), then folding and re-printing it, using his body as the press. These paintings emphasize processes of observation, imprint, and exchange that take place across Merris' practice. Additionally, he will make a Cave Painting in the gallery – a site-specific wall painting that chromatically tunes the room and harmonizes with its shapes and boundaries.

The exhibition will include three new posters, taken from Merris's photographic series *An Other Another* (2012 - ongoing), a long-term project in which the artist creates abstract paintings on his arm and photographs them in surrounding landscapes. Total immersion in the environment and choreographic play animate this work in a roving dialogue between the artist's total being and the medium.

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