

Justin Chance

*Live*

Mar 17 – Apr 29, 2023

The green screen is an object manufactured to disappear. When deployed in Hollywood productions, it dissolves into computer-generated abundance. Justin Chance's *Green Screen, 2023*, a hand-dyed quilt in a shade of chroma-key green, playfully refuses this erasure, calling attention to the green screen as both object and subject. Honoring its namesake as more than a mere site of projection, Chance's version of the green screen sees it transformed into an arresting and highly personal artifact. Its surface bears the intimate marks of its maker: the fabric is flecked and mottled, soft and supple, it falls in loose unscripted motions, no longer just a handmaiden of digital storytelling but the protagonist of its own fluid narrative.

In the 1970s, the pioneering feminist artist and technologist Beryl Korot argued that the Jacquard loom was the oldest form of computer, writing the history of textile-making into that of modern informatics. Anchoring Chance's first solo presentation at Tara Downs, and his solo first exhibition in New York, *Green Screen* pays homage to the material networks that sustain contemporary image-making, to the presence of the real amid the simulated. Building upon the legacy of feminist textile art and recalling traditions of African American quilting, Chance's work points to the enduring relevance of cloth as a mode of communication, an archive of knowledge, a system of information processing, and a radical aesthetic object. In the vein of artists like Mary Lee Bendolph, Rosie Lee Tompkins, or Faith Ringgold, Chance's felted quilts merge painterly facture with concepts of maintenance, care, sustainability, and embodiment.

To create each quilt, Chance uses both wet and needle felting techniques. Raw tufts of wool are soaped, bathed, stretched, poked, and compressed until the fibers cohere and flatten into manipulable felt. Chance then hand-colors, arranges, collages, and sews these fragments into larger compositions, sometimes adding in other found and organic materials, like tobacco or tea leaves. As a final step, he encases the wool in a layer of silk organza — a gesture of protection akin to cradling the ensemble in resin or varnish, as well as one of occlusion, further burying the layers and hours accumulated within each piece.

The title of the show, "Live," evokes both instantaneity and longevity: the fleeting live event, a mandate, or an aspirational refrain. The quilts probe these meanings by instantiating ephemeral thoughts, moods, and pictures in durable wool containers. Displaying what looks to be a palm tree bending in the wind, *Depression (2022)* offers a tongue-in-cheek meditation on individual melancholy routed through the iconography of storm watching, a change in climate becoming a metaphor of individual tumult. In *Endgame (2023)*, squares

reminiscent of Tetris blocks fall from the sky, as men careen around a circle of rods and spokes reminiscent of a Ferris wheel, alluding to the pleasures and risks of game-playing both literal and metaphorical.

Shown alongside the quilts are a series of found calendars from 2002 that were produced to honor and commemorate 9/11. Their pages plot the days and months of the new year beneath high-resolution photographs of the intact Twin Towers. The film theorist Thomas Elsaesser describes Hollywood productions as the “fakes we love to make authentic.” Chance embraces this idea, locating authentic feelings in these “dishonest” images.

— Hannah Stamler

Justin Chance (b. 1993 in New York, US) is an artist and writer based in New York. Chance received a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Bachelor of Arts in Visual & Critical Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2015. Chance’s work has been the subject of solo and two-person exhibitions at the following venues: Tara Downs, New York, US (2023); CFA, presented by Downs & Ross, Milan, IT (2022); Apparatus Projects, Chicago, US (2022); Tuesday, Richmond, US (2021); Smart Objects, Los Angeles, US (2021); Gern en Regalia, New York, US (2021); and Smart Objects, Los Angeles, US (2018). Group exhibitions include: JTT, New York, US (2022); Chapter NY, New York, US (2022); Arsenal Contemporary, New York, US (2022); Downs & Ross, New York, US (2021); Thierry Goldberg, New York, US (2021); Housing, Miami, US (2019); and Institute of Contemporary Art, Baltimore, US (2018).