

EVERYBODY ANNOUNCES

Elliott Jamal Robbins

Chaoskampf

January 23rd - March 7th, 2026

Opening: Friday, January 23rd | 7-9pm

Everybody is excited to present *Chaoskampf* by Elliott Jamal Robbins. This is the artist's second solo exhibition with Everybody.

The term *Chaoskampf* is defined as a recurring mythological narrative about the struggle between order and chaos, good and evil—often staged as a god's defeat of a serpent or monstrous force. Iterations of this story have been told a seemingly countless number of times across eras and cultures, persisting today in the minds of disparate global audiences rather than as a single overarching narrative.

In this new body of work, Elliott Jamal Robbins uses the structure of *Chaoskampf* as a blueprint to interrogate contemporary systems of power, desire, and representation, particularly as they relate to race, masculinity, queerness, and the cultural mechanisms that determine who is seen as deserving of love. Many images throughout this exhibition pose as self-portraiture, but instead serve as tools for Robbins to pry open locked doorways within the artist's personal sphere of media (and the meanings produced by it). The paintings that nod to romance novel covers are a clear example of this tactic. Functionally, what is a romance novel cover other than a didactic for communicating social ideals for love and desire? Here Robbins places himself (as a crossdresser and sissy-of-color) in deep embrace with figures on the opposite end of male-ness, the bulls (highly masculine males and head-of-the-household types). The bulls in these works are further conflated by using iconic comic book imagery, with some depicted in them as different iterations of Superman. In previous bodies of work Robbins has referred to similar characters as "the Fudds" (referencing Elmer Fudd).

Didactic material has long interested Robbins, originally stemming from the artist's research studying early photographic representations of Africans disseminated in Europe and the West in the 1800s and early 1900s. At the time of their production and circulation, these images gave viewers a lesson on how to see and think about dark skinned people. Viewed over one century later, these images can easily initiate a gut reaction that codes them as exploitative or dehumanizing. But to Robbins, a seductive element persists in these images; this has been referred to as "didactic pornography"—something that is both arousing and instructional. The imagery from romance novels, created by Robbins or others, also operates in this way.

Chaoskampf is rooted in the power struggle between two opposing sides and Robbins brings this about in a myriad of ways. White versus black. Feminine versus masculine. Top versus bottom. Self versus other. Human versus machine. And so on. To Robbins, *Chaoskampf* is an ongoing and overarching epic of their own experience and the experiences of subjects beyond them. This brings us to, perhaps unexpectedly, Marcel Duchamp's legendary *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)* that was made between 1915 and 1923.

Robbins sees a modern and personally relatable *Chaoskampf* playing out in *The Large Glass*—one rooted in an automated system of desire, violence, and mass production. *The Large Glass* is separated vertically by two rectangles, the top being the *Bride's Domain* and the bottom being known the *Bachelors' Apparatus* (centered in this section is the *Chocolate Grinder*, which particularly resonates with Robbins). This seminal piece is not open to simple interpretation, but in some of Duchamp's writing, he speaks of the male figures in the bottom left corner as the *Malic Molds*. The molds would fill with gas and come to life as figurative products of the mold. They would then attempt to influence (or attack) the Bride in the upper portion of the piece. The story from here is largely unresolved, giving Robbins an opportunity to complete it.

Within the top section of the *Brides Domain* there are three empty frames surrounded by a wide cloud-like shape. To Robbins, these frames are akin to the three walls of the east gallery in this exhibition. Hung on them are three finely tuned oil paintings that portray Robbins (as the Bride) in embrace with the bulls (the Bachelors). This repositions the Bride not as a passive target of violence but as a corrective force that demands gazes as an act of survival. Robbins' own *Chaoskampf* rides the storm—battling for visibility, desire, and the right to be loved.

Elliott Jamal Robbins (b. 1988, Oklahoma City - He/Him/They/Them) is an artist whose work engages with the archive of visual culture, through the act of subjunction; inserting their subjectivity into a visual field that was developed with the intention of flattening its subjects into stereotypes, and/or discarding any record of their existence all together. They use collage, drawing, painting, text/writing, and recurrent filmic and aesthetic motifs as mediums for their personal storytelling.

In 2017 Robbins received an MFA from the University of Arizona. Previously, they attended the University of Oklahoma, where they received a BFA. Since leaving school, Robbins has shown in solo and group exhibitions in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Berlin, and Basel. They have received many awards and honors, both nationally and internationally. Some include the Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant, the Contemporary Forum Artist Grant, a National Sculpture Society Scholarship, FJJMA Museum Association Award, the John F. and Anna Lee Stacey Scholarship, and the Momentum OKC 2014 Artist Spotlight. As well, their work has been featured in publications such as Propublica, NYT's T Magazine, and Time Out New York.

Everybody is a gallery in Tucson, AZ that primarily works with emerging and perpetually-emerging artists. Its beginnings in Tucson started as a warehouse project space from 2016-2018, followed by an iteration in Chicago, IL from 2019-2020. Everybody's activity has been featured in ARTnews, Arizona Public Media, Contemporary Art Daily, Vulture, and more. Everybody is a member of the New Art Dealers Alliance.