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Contact Erin Cluley Gallery
press@erincluley.com

**Madelyn Sneed-Grays: *Black Joy* Opens
Saturday, August 26th at Erin Cluley Gallery**

[Dallas, Texas – July 26th, 2023] **ERIN CLULEY GALLERY** is pleased to announce *Black Joy* – a new exhibition of work by Denton-based artist Madelyn Sneed-Grays. The exhibition will be on view August 26th through September 30th, 2023, at the gallery’s main location, 150 Manufacturing Street, Suite 210. An opening reception will be held Saturday, August 26th from 4 – 7 PM. The gallery is open weekly Wednesday through Saturday, 12 – 5 PM and by appointment.

“It’s a miracle that Black joy exists. Being consistently reminded of our traumatic past by way of post-traumatic slave syndrome and American society itself, joy shouldn’t be a part of our vernacular. But, due to resilience it is.” — *Madelyn Sneed-Grays*

For as long as suffering and trauma has existed, its antithetical sedative, *joy*, has mounted a cheerful counteroffensive. In her exhibition of the same name, Denton-based painter Madelyn Sneed-Grays celebrates Black joy in a collection of new photorealist portraits. In conversation with Black creatives, entrepreneurs and online personalities, Sneed-Grays creates an exacting portrait of her subjects’ self-fashioning and manifest joy. Her work eschews universalizing narratives of the Black experience for nuggets of nuanced expression.

In *Black Joy*, Sneed-Grays’ work expands her creative use of hyperrealism: the exacting compositions preserve an infectious joy in her subjects for viewers. Following representational painters like Jenny Saville and Chuck Close, Sneed-Grays devises a portraiture not of distance, but unabridged closeness; her intimate focus on detail and texture activates a tactile response from the viewer. Varying in scale, the fashion, environment and pose of the painter’s subjects are brought into the fore by way of equal treatment and care. In the words of Sneed-Grays, “From the infectious smiles and laughter brought on by whatever jokes or experiences are being had, to the ability to truly express our thoughts, ... *we are our ancestors wildest dreams.*”

Black Joy will be Madelyn Sneed-Grays first solo exhibition with Erin Cluley Gallery.

Sneed-Grays’ first exhibition with the gallery was in 2020.

About the Artist

Madelyn Sneed-Grays is a representational painter born in Dallas, TX. She received a BFA in Studio Art from the University of North Texas (2014). Sneed-Grays' work encourages the exploration of different cultures and brings awareness to the ongoing injustices happening to the Black community.

Sneed-Grays was a Hunting Art Prize finalist in 2015. Her work has been exhibited in the New Texas Talent exhibition twice. She received an Honorable Mention for her work in the Annual National Juried Exhibition at the Wausau Museum of Contemporary Art, Wausau, WI.

Her work was acquired by the LSU Museum of Fine Art through the Winifred and Kevin P. Reilly Initiative for Underrepresented Artists and has been published in magazines such as *Poets Artists* and *Friend of the Artist*.

About Erin Cluley Gallery

Erin Cluley Gallery is a contemporary art gallery representing emerging, mid-career, and established artists from Dallas and the United States. The gallery presents a provocative program of artists working in both traditional and alternative forms including painting, sculpture, new media, photography, sculptural installation and public intervention.

In 2014, Erin Cluley Gallery ignited a creative movement in West Dallas acting as a hub for visual arts and community engagement. After nearly five years on Fabrication Street, the gallery has moved its operation to Riverbend – a development in Dallas' Design District celebrating the intersection between culture and commerce.

In April 2021, Cluley opened Cluley Projects – a satellite location in West Dallas acting as an incubator space focusing on regional artists and providing a platform for discovery and mentorship.

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