

Chris Watts is an American abstract painter whose work interrogates social and personal narratives around the (black) body and understandings of the visible. Within his work, the artist seeks to analyse, re-examine and revise existing conventions by means of their abstract representation and, thus, re-evaluation.

At the center of this artistic approach lies the creation of moments of disruption. These moments might be generated by absence, as well as the representation of windows as switches into a layered assemblage of space where the distinction between what is real and what is represented is thoroughly confused. Painted on soft and sheer textiles like poly-chiffon, silk, or poly blend wraps, the disruption functions on a visual as well as tactile level, through the haptic qualities of the surface. Thereby, the works foster an encompassing perceptual reception and a reconsideration of the terms of 'the visible'.

In a recent body of work, the artist addresses the figure and abstract role of the black body. Sourced from video footage depicting police violence towards black bodies, the abstract paintings overturn prescribed modes of figurative representation, placing a sense of absence instead. By totally erasing the figure, the paintings of Chris Watts emphasize the act of disappearance, a non-locatable subject, emancipating notions of blackness from the Western imagination and presenting possible ways in which history could be embodied.

Chris Watts was born in 1984 in High Point, NC, US. He graduated in Fine Arts from Yale School of Art, New Haven, CT, after attending the College of Arts and Architecture, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, NC, and the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, Wroclaw, PL. The artist has held various artist residencies, among them the Marek Maria Pienkowski Foundation, Chelm, PL; McColl Center for Art + Innovation, Charlotte, NC; the Art & Law Fellowship Program, at Cornell University Art Architecture Planning, New York, NY; and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Workspace Program, New York, NY. His work has been exhibited in numerous national and international institutional and exhibitions. Chris Watts lives and works in New York, NY, and North Carolina, NC.