

# MARCH

**Mike Goodlett**

***Chez Lui***

**December 5 - January 9, 2021**

**[www.marchgallery.org](http://www.marchgallery.org)**

Beginning December 5th, MARCH will present *Chez Lui*, an exhibition of recent works by Mike Goodlett, staged in the artist's home and studio outside of Lexington, Kentucky. Drawings, sculptures, and installations appear amid a series of architectural interventions, comprising a group of totalized aesthetic environments. Making public the private spaces in which Goodlett lives and works—the very spaces where these works were produced—this exhibition invites the viewer to share a momentary glimpse of this ultimate work in progress.

Situated at the end of a narrow dirt road nearly a mile long, the farmhouse where Goodlett has lived and worked for nearly thirty years affords him an unusual amount of privacy. An ample yard buffers the handsome clapboard structure against a densely wooded perimeter, which shields the property from onlookers and the distant neighbors. Goodlett moved to the property in the early 1990s, after graduating from the Art Academy of Cincinnati, when his grandparents, who had owned and tried to sell the house, passed away. Of his decision to move, Goodlett describes having been motivated by the sense that the house represented a kind of escape: the secluded property offered a respite from the pressures of others' judgements and expectations, and freedom from the familiar feelings of seeming too weird, too gross, too tall, or too gay. And so the house, in its state of relative disrepair, became, for Goodlett, a generative site for personal growth and creative production. Beyond the province of others' opinions, and fortified by a newfound and chosen solitude, Goodlett undertook to develop an idiosyncratic and highly personal art of queer desire.

In both his drawings and sculptures, Goodlett exploits a vocabulary of pendulous, curvilinear, and bulbous forms that suggest, and occasionally represent, parts of the human body. Intimations of erogenous anatomies appear most frequently, and Goodlett's compositions often seem constructed of lips, nipples, and penises, arranged in unreal combinations. His sculptures, made of concrete or aqua resin formed in custom molds of spandex or nylon, similarly suggest stacked genitalia. His work in both media renders material these kinky forms, and engages its erotic content with varying degrees of explicitness. What amounts to a kind of purposeful representational ambivalence, Goodlett describes as "designed subterfuge." It's a method that he's developed to describe his urges on the "down low," a phrase emblazoned across one of his drawings: instead of naming his desires with obvious forms, Goodlett works in a coded language that engages restraint, making work that both suggests his desires and keeps them hidden in plain sight.

The presentation of Goodlett's work in his home complicates this relationship to privacy by making public spaces that are typically private. Through a series of vignettes in which his drawings and sculptures engage elements of the space, *Chez Lui* makes clear the central role that Goodlett's house plays in his practice. The presentation similarly makes plain that Goodlett has engaged the house in a kind of protracted dialogue of call and response—when the ceiling cracks, he creates an arrangement of paper petals that emerge from the crack—resulting in an ever-expanding series of architectural modifications. *Chez Lui* is ultimately organized in response to the house, and reveals the sites of domesticity and creative production that are often kept far from view.

- Zach Fischman

Mike Goodlett (b. 1958, Lexington, Kentucky) lives and works in rural Kentucky. He received his B.F.A. from the Art Academy of Cincinnati in 1983. Goodlett's work has been the subject of solo presentations at the John Michael Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan, Wisconsin; the University of Kentucky Art Museum, Lexington; Tops Gallery, Memphis; Galerie Christian Berst, New York; and Institute 193, Lexington. His work is frequently featured in group presentations, including recent exhibitions at Atlanta Contemporary, Atlanta; Shrine, New York; Mrs., New York; and Summertime, New York, among others. In 2019, Goodlett's work was featured in the Atlanta Biennial.

For more information: [info@marchgallery.org](mailto:info@marchgallery.org)