

Press release

Jordan Casteel

Winter Sun

19 October—23 December 2026
Opening Monday 19 October, 6—8pm

Thaddaeus Ropac
Paris Marais
7, rue Debelleye, 75003 Paris



Jordan Casteel, *Generations*, 2026
Oil on canvas, 152.4 × 198.1 cm (60 × 78 in)

Thaddaeus Ropac Paris Marais presents *Winter Sun*, an exhibition of new paintings by American artist Jordan Casteel, marking her first exhibition in France, as well as the most significant showing of her work in Europe to date. Created in the first half of 2026, the artist situates her paintings in a cool, earthy palette inspired by the light in the depths of winter. *Winter Sun* reflects on a period of

dormancy and renewal, hope and grief, love and loss, and light and darkness. Figurative portraits, landscapes and botanical works deepen Casteel's ongoing observation of kinship, place and transition.

Casteel's practice is rooted in the monumentalisation of the collective, offering intimate, dignified encounters

that reflect her deep commitment to community. Her subjects – who are always a direct reflection of her surroundings – often bring into focus people of colour as a way of mapping and honouring the social landscape of her immediate environment, as well as its artistic history. The portraits on view depict a broad spectrum of sitters, ranging from Casteel’s close circle of family and friends to strangers encountered in the spaces she inhabits. In *before your time* (2026), from her celebrated *Subway Series* (2015–present), dynamics of care play out within an intertwined family set against the cool geometry of a train carriage. The family forms a single unit beneath the stark subway safety notice ‘Don’t die before your time’, which links the work to the fundamental ideas of mortality and survival that pervade the still lives on view. The

Delaney as a key influence for her own use of colour in the works on view, each of which is characterised by the dominance of a single sharp yet sumptuous tone, which becomes a vehicle for feeling. ‘The gesture of covering the canvas in a colour is setting the stage for the rest of the painting,’ Casteel says. ‘It becomes an aura, an essence of the work’. This colouristic approach centres emotional presence over strict realism while elevating the works from the everyday, pulling them subtly towards the language of abstraction.

Casteel’s paintings have always processed the external world through the lens of her own personhood, and demonstrate a sustained interest in the theme of maternal care. In recent years, however, her work has acquired a distinctly autobiographical cadence, expanding to embrace her immediate domestic sphere while preserving her profound attachment to community. In this body of work, she returns to these foundational motifs following the birth of her son: a threshold she marks in the evocatively transitional title of the exhibition, with its ‘sun’ implying the homonymous ‘son’. In *Weighted (For Clyde)* (2026), Casteel turns her gaze inward, depicting herself carrying the newborn against her chest, his small body tenderly framed by his booties and the artist’s enveloping hands. Casteel’s own face and her son’s fall beyond the frame, allowing the grassy background, the fabric of the carrier and Casteel’s shirt – textured and left partially undone – to operate as fields of colour, loosening the



Jordan Casteel, *before your time*, 2026
Oil on canvas, 228.6 × 198.1 cm (90 × 78 in)

artist gives a voice to microcosmic scenes of humanity, proximity, parental protection, the passage of time and the sacred brevity of childhood as they play out within the public space.

Foregoing the formality and implicit power dynamics of the traditional studio sitting, Casteel works from photographs of her subjects. ‘I am meeting people where they are, as opposed to asking them to enter my space’, she explains. Alice Neel’s figures, painted at ease, serve as an anchor to Casteel’s conception of portraiture, as does Harlem Renaissance painter Beauford Delaney’s expressionist approach to colour. Casteel cites



Jordan Casteel, *Weighted (For Clyde)*, 2026
Oil on canvas, 127 × 101.6 cm (50 × 40 in)



Jordan Casteel, *Last Blooms*, 2026
Oil on canvas, 182.9 x 142.2 cm (72 x 56 in)

image from description and bringing the intimate specificity of touch forward.

Painting, mothering and gardening are deeply intertwined acts of creation, and through these parallel processes of daily, hands-on care, Casteel establishes a conceptual bridge between her portraiture and her paintings of flowers. ‘For me, it’s all about cultivating’, she explains. ‘It’s about starting from the base, whether that’s the blank space of the canvas or the empty space of land.’ Since establishing a home in the Hudson Valley in 2021, Casteel has increasingly embraced her more rural surroundings in her paintings. Several of the paintings of flowers on view originate in her garden, where she often works *en plein air* with the canvas on her lap. Treated with the same dignity as the subjects of her portraits, the bouquets and blooms are rendered with detailed consideration and often closely cropped, granting them a personified presence. For the artist, the garden is a space for metabolising ideas of decay and renewal in the wider world. The flowers’ delicate heads press tenaciously toward the surface of the canvases amid a cooler palette that implies the shifting of seasons and the closing in of harsher weather, transformed into symbols of hope that endures through hardship.

Countering these intimate studies are larger-scale works exploring the expansive art-historical tradition of

the still life while reflecting on memory, family and the rituals through which we honour those we have lost. Cut stems make up a *memento mori* set against a domestic kitchen counter, evoking the transience of all living things, while *Memorial (For John)* (2026) marks a return to a subject Casteel first treated in 2017 in a work – also titled *Memorial* – that depicts a floral tribute she found discarded on a Harlem street. The return to this motif underscores the continuity of Casteel’s practice, which has evolved across the neighbourhoods and communities she has called home over the years. Casteel collapses the distinctions between landscape and portrait, and between the varied urban and rural settings that feature in her most recent works to create modern-day *vanitas* that give form to time, absence and remembrance. She offers all her subjects equal consideration, giving each as much weight as the next as part of the unfolding landscape of life. Ultimately, these works remind us that amid the ebb and flow of love and loss, growth and grief, the act of witnessing – and tending to – our lived environments remains the most profound act of all.



Jordan Casteel, *Memorial (For John)*, 2026
Oil on canvas, 182.9 x 142.2 cm (72 x 56 in)

The exhibition will be accompanied by a catalogue featuring an essay by Amandine Nana, who is a writer, poet, art historian and curator at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris. This follows Casteel’s debut monograph, published by Phaidon in 2025, which features nearly 150 images of the artist’s work.



Portrait of the artist. Photo: © David Schulze.

About the artist

Jordan Casteel lives and works in New York. She received her MFA in Painting and Printmaking from Yale School of Art in 2014. From 2016 to 2021, she taught as an associate professor of painting at Rutgers University–Newark – the series of portraits she made of her students there were hung in the first room of her acclaimed solo museum show *Within Reach* at New Museum, New York (2020). In 2024, Casteel was the subject of a solo exhibition spanning the past decade of her practice at the Hill Art Foundation, New York. She has also presented solo exhibitions at institutions including the Denver Art Museum (2019); and the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University (2019–20). In 2019, New York’s High Line Art commissioned a 1,400-square-foot mural of Casteel’s painting *The Baayfalls*. She is the recipient of a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship (2021), the John Koch Award, American Academy of Arts and Letters (2024) and is currently a member of the Board of Trustees of The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (as of 2023).

Casteel’s work was recently included in *The Time is Always Now: Artists Reframe the Black Figure* at the National Portrait Gallery, London, in 2024, which travelled to The Box, Plymouth; Philadelphia Museum of Art; and North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh. The artist has also participated in group exhibitions at Tang Teaching Museum & Art Gallery, Saratoga Springs (2025; which travelled to Montclair Art Museum, 2026); Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw (2025); Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond (2025); Brooklyn Museum, New York (2024); Baltimore Museum of Art (2023); Saint Louis Art Museum (2023); New Orleans Museum of Art (2023); Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt (2023); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2021–23); The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2022); Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth (2022); Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2022); Pérez Art Museum, Miami (2022); Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2021); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2020); Art Institute of Chicago (2021); and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2018).

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