

## MIKE HENDERSON

### *Truth, Love, and Curiosity*

**Exhibition Dates:** September 11 - October 25, 2025  
**Opening Reception:** Thursday, September 11, 5:00PM - 7:30PM  
**Featuring a live performance by Mike Henderson & Cabin Fever**

*“When I surrender to the creative process, it turns me into part of what really matters. No matter how high the highs or how low the lows, these works came to me through truth, love, and curiosity.” — Mike Henderson*

Haines Gallery proudly presents **Mike Henderson: *Truth, Love, and Curiosity***, our sixteenth solo exhibition with the pioneering Bay Area visual artist, musician, and filmmaker. Born in Marshall, MO in 1943, Henderson has been an important figure in the Northern California art scene since the 1960s. Now in his 80s, the artist continues to create works that surprise and challenge our expectations. Named after the impulses that fuel Henderson’s fearlessly inventive practice, *Truth, Love, and Curiosity* features his gestural, highly tactile oil paintings alongside a selection of his early experimental films.

**The exhibition’s opening reception takes place on Thursday, September 11, 2025 during the Fort Mason Art Walk, and features a live blues performance by Mike Henderson and his band, Cabin Fever.**

Rather than working from preconceived plans or notions, Henderson’s paintings are guided by an openness and responsiveness to the medium’s potential. As the artist explains, “Each brush stroke opens up so many new ways of seeing, working, and thinking.” Henderson uses a brush, palette knife, and even his fingers to push, pull, and scrape paint across the canvas, working and reworking each surface repeatedly as he builds layers of textural and chromatic detail. The resulting works are visually complex, materially dense, and pulsating with energy.

*Truth, Love, and Curiosity* focuses on a series of large-scale paintings that Henderson began in 2023. Articulating his uninhibited approach to mark-making, color, and composition, these new works are varied and singular, from the compact, irregular grids in works such as *Avalanche* (2023-25) to the kinetic orange dashes that skip across *Sparks* (2024). In *Beyond Time* (2025), Henderson balances large fields of cream and brown with the occasional patchwork of rainbow-colored striations.

Rather than describe the works, Henderson’s ambiguous, evocative, and often poetic titles offer insight into the concerns, philosophies, and influences distilled into his abstract canvases. *Here Today* (2024)—a loosely-gridded



Mike Henderson, *Here Today*, 2024  
 Oil on canvas, 72 x 60 inches  
 Photo: Shaun Roberts



Mike Henderson, *Avalanche*, 2023-25  
 Oil on canvas, 72 x 87 inches  
 Photo: Shaun Roberts

painting radiating with interlocking bands of color—elides the idiom’s second half (“Gone Tomorrow”), suggesting instead that we focus mindfully on the present moment and all that it can offer. With a similarly expansive take on temporality, *The Next Blue Moon* (2025)—a work whose palette is reflected in its name—retools a turn of phrase typically used to denote a rare phenomenon, instead finding hope in the ever-present possibility of its recurrence.

Henderson’s new paintings are exhibited in dialogue selection of small works from the 1990s and 2000s, all on view for the first time. The artist calls these his “worry paintings,” pieces he returns to every now and then until something in them “comes into focus.” The exhibition also includes a selection of Henderson’s 16mm films from the 1970s and 1980s, many of which have been acquired and restored by the Academy Film Archive. Politically charged and often wickedly funny, these productions range from powerful “talking blues films” about Black experience to improvisational compositions and absurd musings. Shown together, the varied works in *Truth, Love, and Curiosity* reveal the artist’s penchant for play and experimentation, and a lifelong commitment to creative freedom.

**Mike Henderson: *Truth, Love, and Curiosity*** coincides with the second annual **Nexus: SF/Bay Area Black Art Week** (October 1 - 5, 2025), as well as a number of institutional exhibitions that include Henderson’s work. ***People Make This Place: SFAI Stories*** at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (July 26, 2025 - July 5, 2026) and ***Far Out: Northern California Art from the di Rosa Collection*** at the di Rosa Art Center for Contemporary Art’s new San Francisco exhibition space (August 2 - October 4, 2025) feature paintings from the 1960s and 1980s respectively. In New York, ***Sixties Surreal*** at the Whitney Museum of American Art (September 24, 2025 - January 19, 2026) will include an early film.

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## ABOUT THE ARTIST

**Mike Henderson** has been the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship (1973), two National Endowment for the Arts Artist Grants (1989, 1978), an Artadia Award (2019), and Margrit Mondavi Arts Medallion (2022). Henderson’s paintings and films have been exhibited in such distinguished institutions as Berkeley Art Museum, CA; Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University, CA; Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA; de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; School of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY.

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Mike Henderson, *I Am Ready Again*, 2023  
Oil on canvas, 24 x 18 inches



Still from Mike Henderson, *Dufus (aka Art)*,  
1970, revised 1973  
16mm film transfer, 6:00 mins  
Courtesy the Academy Film Archive