GUS MONDAY
THREE ROOMS – MUSEUM, INSTITUTION, GALLERY
SAVILE ROW, LONDON
14.10 – 15.11.2025

Carl Kostyál is delighted to present 'Three Rooms – Museum, Institution, Gallery', a presentation of seven new paintings by the British-South African artist Gus Monday (b. 2000), marking the artist's debut solo exhibition with the gallery and in London.

"In 'Three Rooms – Museum, Institution, Gallery', Monday performs a literal and critical dissection of three distinct, if mutually referential, spatial archetypes: the museum, the institution, and the gallery. Installed across the three rooms of Carl Kostyál, London, this presentation stages a self-reflective critique in which the exhibition space itself mirrors the very typologies under examination.

The first room examines how geopolitical and economic conditions shape whether museums can function as institutions of preservation and care. Across two single-panel works and one diptych, Monday contrasts the immaculate facilities of European collections with the under-resourced conservation spaces of South Africa. Central here is the Iziko South African Museum — the country's first museum — where the ceiling of its conservation room collapsed, leaving objects damaged and unprotected. Among them was a diorama, once used to depict the Khoi-San people, which had already been removed from public view due to its reductive and colonial framing. The collapse becomes emblematic not of the fragility of the objects themselves, but of the systemic neglect that determines which histories are maintained and which are left to disintegrate. The recurring draped figure signals this absence, marking the uneven distribution of care and the institutions that fail to provide it.

These veiled ghosts haunt the artist's depictions of the state-of-the-art Victoria & Albert Storehouse in East London, the storied Accademia di Brera in Milan, and the sprawling Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa in Cape Town, existing as both the witnesses and casualties of so-called institutional care. Notably, Monday's oeuvre is characterised by his use of conservation-grade copper tacks to adhere his canvases to their wooden backings.

More directly, the works in the second room, both titled *Freemasons' Hall*, 2025, explore the ways ideology can be encoded within architecture. In lieu of shrouded figures, Monday allows space itself to be the protagonist of his depictions of the vestibule and Grand Temple of the headquarters of the secretive fraternal institution in central London. Limned with symmetry and theatrical precision, the checkerboard floors and neoclassical columns convey an atmosphere of order; however, meaning is obfuscated through repetition and indeterminate proportions. Great swathes of exposed linen suggest the omission of certain narratives, yet the artist does not sensationalise conspiracy as much as consider how certain institutions sanctify power by embedding belief into architecture.

Just as the previous paintings consider the ways Masonic belief can be embedded within symbolic architecture, the works in the third room reflect on the contemporary art gallery as yet another site of reverence and quietly naturalised power.

In *Study for H&W Somerset Sculpture Garden,* 2025 — the smallest painting in this exhibition, and the only one to consider an outdoor landscape — Monday reimagines the iconic Piet Oudolf-designed garden at Hauser & Wirth's countryside campus as a fractured, schematic diagram made up of pools, funnels, and wire-like geometries, extruding a system of spectacle and control from an once calm, pastoral landscape. Painted with a hyper-natural palette of aquas, umbers, and greys, this work appears stark in contrast to the monochromatism of *Thaddaeus Ropac (Pittura Infamante),* 2025. Circling back to the narrative device employed across the first room of this exhibition, Monday's sketch of a spectral staircase is interrupted by the imposition of Dürer's *Praying Hands,* 1508, neatly framed (albeit hung upside down) above a schematic drawing of a toilet — a nod to the anecdote alleging that the eponymous gallerist keeps an etching of the Northern Renaissance masterwork in the latrine of his personal apartment above his gallery.

Collectively and sequentially, the works of 'Three Rooms – Museum, Institution, Gallery', suggest that devotion in the art world is less attached to the sacred than to the systems which aestheticise and circulate belief."

– Olamiju Fajemisin

Gus Monday (b. 2000, London) is a British–South African artist currently based in London. He received his BA in Fine Art from the City & Guilds of London Art School in 2023 and his MA in Painting from the Royal College of Art in 2024. Monday's debut with Carl Kostyál in London marks the artist's first solo exhibition.

Recent group exhibitions include: 'Art Basel Hong Kong', Ames Yavuz, Hong Kong, 2025; 'Maison Clearing', C L E A R I N G, Basel, 2025; 'The Cloak of Dreams', curated by Carl Kostyál, SWCAC, Shenzhen, 2025; 'Invitational Draw Jam', Carl Kostyál, Egypt, 2025; 'Nowhere to Be', L.U.P.O Lorenzelli Projects, Milan, 2025; 'Through Closed Eyes, Darkly', Belenius, Stockholm, 2025; 'A Gesture, A Room, A Memory', Ames Yavuz, Singapore, 2025; 'Art SG', Seojung Gallery, Singapore, 2025; 'The Observers', Seojung Gallery, Busan, 2024; 'MA Degree Show', Royal College of Art, London, 2024; 'Summer Fling III', L.U.P.O Lorenzelli Projects, Milan, 2024; 'Art OnO 아트 오앤오', Seojung Gallery, Seoul, 2024; 'Palimpsestic Impressions', Arusha Gallery, London, 2024.