



Photo courtesy of Library Street Collective

Artist Biography

Paul Verdell is a painter based in Detroit, Michigan. Originally from Long Beach, California, he moved to Ohio as a teen and received a BFA from Bowling Green State University in December of 2018. Verdell approaches drawing and painting through the chosen media of oil and acrylic paints, oil pastels, and crayons, adding loose and instinctive marks to his two-dimensional works. He experiments freely with gesture and application through a constant cycle of creation and modification, working mutually with his material to allow it to reveal its desired form. What results from this focus on process are luminous and wild expanses of pigment that highlight Verdell's agility and proficiency with color, a foundation upon which his practice thrives. Influencing the artist's conceptual root is both internal discourse—an ongoing attempt to understand himself within a shifting and uncertain world through the act of painting—as well as his Black American heritage.

Born in Long Beach, CA in 1991
Lives and works in Detroit, MI

Biography courtesy of the artist and Library Street Collective.

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Special thanks to Tara Akitt and the entire team at Library Street Collective for their support of this exhibition.

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GALLERY GUIDE

Paul Verdell: Tabernacle

March 13 - June 6, 2026

The Contemporary Dayton is proud to present *Paul Verdell: Tabernacle*, featuring six large-scale paintings by Detroit-based artist Paul Verdell. In this series of gestural paintings, Verdell continues his exploration of loose, instinctive mark making, layering paint with collaged elements to create compositions that hover between abstraction and landscape. Colors and forms subtly echo horizons, while fractured planes and shifting atmospheres map what the artist describes as a kind of mental terrain. These works become landscapes both visually and figuratively—sites where perception, memory, and emotion converge.

This exhibition is one of three concurrent exhibitions of new and recent work by Detroit-based artists, curated by Heather Jones, Curator and Director of Programs and Engagement, and presented to spark dialogue around the art and artists of our time. Also on view is *Jason REVOK: Mutually Exclusive* and *Jamea Richmond-Edwards: Leviathan*. All three artists are based in Detroit, and these exhibitions consider the shared connections between Detroit and Dayton, cities with intertwined legacies as industrial centers shaped by The Great Migration, economic upheaval, and profound cultural innovation. By presenting these exhibitions in Dayton, we open a space to reflect on these parallel histories and on the resilience and creativity that continue to define both cities.

Driven by intuition, Verdell's latest body of work delves deeply into the capacities of both medium and mind. His practice is rooted in an ongoing internal discourse, an attempt to situate himself within a shifting and uncertain world through the

act of painting. Influencing this conceptual framework is his Black American heritage, which informs the work not as illustration, but as a lived and embodied presence shaping gesture, structure, and inquiry.

"Verdell's paintings are immersive and deeply felt, balancing spontaneity with intention. Through layered gestures and shifting fields of color, the works create a space for viewers to pause, reflect, and form their own interpretations. In *Tabernacle*, abstraction becomes a way to process both personal and collective experience, inviting moments of contemplation and connection."

Based in Detroit, Verdell was born in Long Beach, California, and moved to Ohio as a teenager. He received his BFA from Bowling Green State University in 2018. His career has quickly gained international attention, with exhibitions at The Armory Show, Hurst Contemporary in London, and the Dakar Biennale in Dakar, Senegal. He has completed residencies at Black Rock Senegal in Dakar and the Macedonia Institute in Chatham, New York.

Verdell's work is held in the collections of the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum in East Lansing, Michigan, and Rocket Mortgage FieldHouse in Cleveland, Ohio, among others.

With *Tabernacle*, Verdell advances a painterly language that is both searching and assured, gestural yet deliberate, inviting viewers into a space where abstraction becomes a form of reckoning and refuge.

For the 2026-2027 season, The Contemporary Dayton (TCD) will mark its 35th anniversary, alongside the nation's 250th birthday, by centering the theme of Freedom of Expression across its exhibitions and public programs. For more than three decades, The Contemporary Dayton has served as a vital civic and cultural anchor, providing a forum for open inquiry and critical reflection. As a contemporary art center, TCD affirms the principles of the First Amendment and supports artists' rights to free expression, particularly when engaging complex or contested ideas.

Exhibition Checklist

For pricing information, please see the Welcome Desk.



Charlevoix, 2025
Acrylic, oil, and collage on canvas
48 x 48 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Library Street Collective



Midnight Still, 2025
Acrylic, oil, and collage on canvas
77 x 80 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Library Street Collective



Could be a Still Life, 2025
Acrylic, oil, and collage on canvas
77 x 57 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Library Street Collective



Ultramarine Marine Marine..., 2025
Acrylic, oil, and collage on canvas
77 x 49 1/2 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Library Street Collective



If only a Cloud, 2025
Acrylic, oil, and collage on canvas
77 x 46 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Library Street Collective



Vein in Vain, 2025
Acrylic, oil, and collage on canvas
78 x 120 inches
Courtesy of the artist and Library Street Collective