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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN: REGGIE BURROWS HODGES

Using matte-black paint to render the backgrounds of his canvases, as well as the bodies and faces of his figures, this Black American painter makes ingenious use of so-called negative space as both a metaphor for hegemonic white culture and an expression of memory's blur. (The artist's impressive New York début is currently on view at Karma.) Hodges's scenes—which also employ a beautiful, muted palette of violet, yellow, green, orange, red, and blue—are consistently compelling, thanks to his paint handling and to their seductive narrative quality. But the subject matter and the pictorial scope vary dramatically. The intimate “Danale’s Mirror” captures a private moment: a woman sits cross-legged on the floor, holding a mascara wand, tilting her head with the graceful, straight-backed posture of a dancer. “Hurdling: Green” portrays a leaping athlete and, at first glance, might suggest an abstract study of motion, but fuchsia shorts and reaching limbs soon emerge from the dark background—evidence of the painter’s alchemical command of gesture and color. - *Johanna Fateman*