

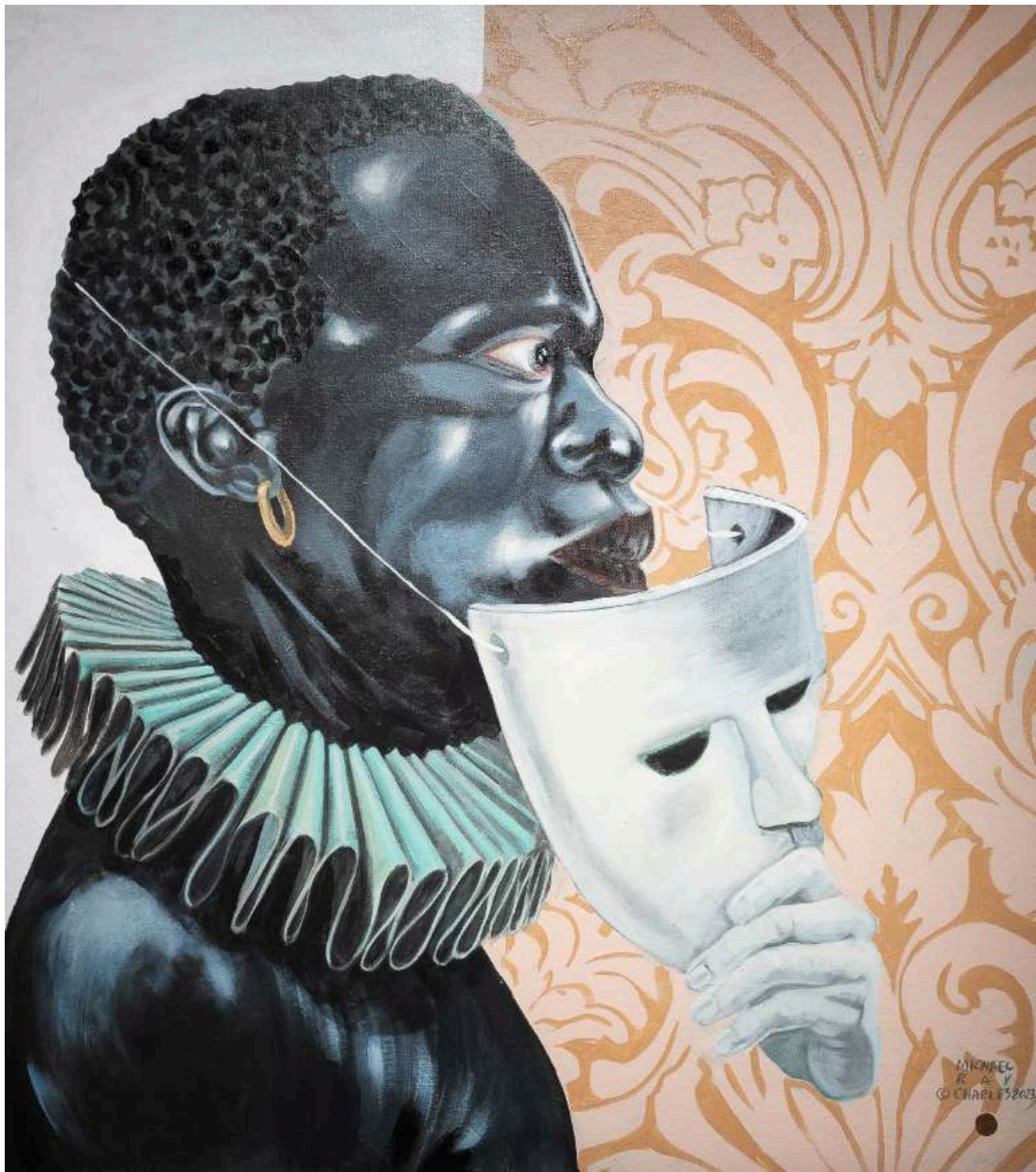
TEMPLON

II

MICHAEL RAY CHARLES

ART CURRENTLY, April 2023

American Minstrelsy Through The Lens of Michael Ray Charles at Templon, New York



Michael Ray Charles, *VENI VIDI*, Templon - New York. Courtesy of Galerie Templon.

At Galerie Templon in New York, Michael Ray Charles' *VENI VIDI* showcases the artist's expanded focus to encompass various forms of political discrimination through his paintings. He is known for exploring issues within the African-American diaspora, especially race, and gender.

Small portraits and large format paintings of political figures who played a role in the abolition of slavery and segregation are painted with a burlesque, surrealist, and theatrical palette reminiscent of 19th-century *minstrel shows*. The enigmatic masked portraits tackle modern issues of discrimination, including those towards the LGBTQ(*sic*) community and gender differences, alluding to the complexity of the subject matter.

VENI VIDI marks a significant moment in Charles' career after dedicating nearly two decades to his studio practice and research. The exhibition showcases his unwavering commitment to using art to explore and expose the nuances of political discrimination.

Charles has expanded his artistic vocabulary in *VENI VIDI*, incorporating the language of dandyism and masquerade ceremonies. *Dandyism* is a powerful social marker, while the *masquerade ceremonies* highlight ancient African traditions, allowing Charles to examine sensitive questions from multiple perspectives.

The exhibition also displays a smoother pictorial touch, representing communication channels becoming more consensual. Charles' continued commitment to exploring the complexities of political discrimination is evident - a deep understanding of contemporary political issues and his desire to transcend racial and societal differences.

VENI VIDI is a must-see at Galerie Templon, running through May 6, 2023.



Exhibition view: Michael Ray Charles, *VENI VIDI*, Templon - New York. Courtesy of Galerie Templon.