

# The 6 Rising Artists to Watch in 2019



As a boy raised by his grandparents in Orange, New Jersey, Vaughn Spann made pictures of the things and people he saw. So he was surprised to discover that little of the life he depicted showed up in his art history textbooks. Once enrolled in Yale's M.F.A. program, from which he graduated in 2018, the Newark-based artist set out to paint what he knew, exploring the contemporary realities of African-American life. Spann, 26, was included last year in group shows at Almine Rech, in London; David Castillo, in Miami; and [Night Gallery](#), in Los Angeles. He also had his first solo show, in New York, at Half Gallery. He has developed "a pluralistic practice," as he calls it, devoted to both figurative and symbol-laden abstract work that uses not just canvas but also silk, paper, and terrycloth, which he stitches together with an industrial sewing machine. The idea, he says, is to create "an amalgamation of materials that have charged messages about the discarded, the abject, the beautiful, and the sublime." —[Antwaun Sargent](#)