

# Stephen Friedman Gallery

## Art Basel 'OVR: Portals'

16–19 June 2021



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Stephen Friedman Gallery is pleased to present 'I – We – They' a show of works by **Denzil Forrester**, **Rivane Neuenschwander** and **Deborah Roberts** for 'OVR: Portals', Art Basel's first curator-led edition of its Online Viewing Rooms. The display comprises paintings, works on paper and textiles that examine the curatorial theme of social divides and ideas of community and identity.

Highlights include works by Grenada-born, British artist Denzil Forrester who is renowned for vibrant colourful paintings and drawings that depict the dynamic energy of the reggae and dub nightclub scene. During the early 1980s, he captured images of his East London community by taking his sketchbook and creating drawings of the crowded club dancefloor in situ. The artist still transfers the vitality of these sketches today to his paintings by using rapid brush strokes to emulate the rhythm of the music. Presented alongside a drawing rendered in charcoal and pastels from the 1980s, is a vivid large-scale painting from 2005 that typifies Forrester's powerful approach. In 2021, the artist's work will feature in the Coventry Biennial and in a major exhibition devoted to Caribbean connections in British art since the 1950s at Tate Britain, London.

Works by Rivane Neuenschwander, one of Brazil's most internationally acclaimed artists are also included in the presentation. The artist has an interest in folk traditions, psychoanalysis and the ways in which childhood fears shape our identity as adults. On display is a complex large-scale acrylic on fabric work from the 'Assombrados' series and screen-prints from the 'O Nome do Medo' series made by the artist during workshops with children. Inspired by their drawings of specific fears such as snakes and ghosts, Neuenschwander recreates the children's illustrations as silhouettes on the fabric and combines them with text. The artist creates works that consider how fears can be manipulated on a social and political scale. Employing the same collaborative technique for her 'O Nome do Medo' series, Neuenschwander makes playful collages derived from children's cut-outs. These works were created as part of the artist's solo presentation at the Museu de Arte do Rio, Brazil in 2017.

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Also on view are recent text works by African-American artist Deborah Roberts who addresses complexities surrounding the formation of Black female identity. The artist questions the construction of race and the racialising gaze endemic to Western culture. Presented are three text-based serigraphs from 2020 in which Roberts challenges the viewer to think about the meanings we attach to specific words and the racial tendencies that are ingrained in language. Like her collages and paintings, Roberts' text works are an expansion of the artist's wider conversation engaging American history and black culture. Deborah Roberts' major solo exhibition 'I'm' at The Contemporary Austin, Texas, continues until 15 August 2021 before touring to MCA Denver.

### **About Stephen Friedman Gallery**

Stephen Friedman Gallery represents exceptional emerging and mid-career artists from around the world. Since its inauguration in 1995, the gallery has been based in Mayfair on Old Burlington Street. The gallery now has three spaces in which it hosts solo and group exhibitions throughout the year. Additional works can be viewed by appointment in private rooms and office spaces. There is also a facility to exhibit outdoor sculpture in a landscaped private garden.