

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Frieze Seoul

6-9 September 2023

Booth A37

COEX, 513
Yeongdong-daero
Gangnam-gu
06164
Seoul, Korea



For Frieze Seoul 2023, Stephen Friedman Gallery is pleased to present a group exhibition that explores the power and instability of contemporary portraiture. 'The Face and The Figure' brings together internationally acclaimed artists including **Juan Araujo, Jonathan Baldock, Sarah Ball, Caroline Coon, Denzil Forrester, Sky Glabush, Wayne Gonzales, Ged Quinn, Anne Rothenstein, Yinka Shonibare CBE RA, Caroline Walker** and **Yooyun Yang**. Though stylistically and geographically diverse, each artist approaches their subjects with a critical perspective, reinvigorating the complex history of portraiture and providing a nuanced lens through which to explore identity, history, and transformation.

Historically, portraits have served to establish a sitter's socio-economic standing, as well as reveal their likeness and character. In contemporary practice, artists rely on an interplay between the empirical and the imagination. They blend fact and fiction to create images - and explore subjects - that resist easy interpretation.

Through a careful treatment of light, Korean artist Yooyun Yang's paintings are contemplative, lurking between the real and the imagined. Her atmospheric depictions of enigmatic subjects resist our gaze. Cloaked in darkness with faces concealed, she captures intimate moments of human emotion. Also working with anonymous figures, American painter Wayne Gonzales presents a claustrophobic tableau of a crowd. Although the source image appears to be extracted and enlarged from a newspaper clipping, Gonzales constructs it from disparate images culled from the internet, creating a fictive portrait of a fictive event.

A large new tapestry by British artist Jonathan Baldock continues the artist's practice of using humour to investigate themes of mortality and spirituality as they relate to the body. Blending the theatrical with the macabre, his off-beat assemblages suggest the pathos of the human condition. British artists Sarah Ball and Caroline Coon explore gender and identity in their stylised paintings. In a new portrait, *Fin* (2023), Ball's young protagonist appears to be both real and spectral, contemporary and timeless - a slippage that seems intentional yet somewhat uncanny. Coon's paintings and drawings are united in their distinct rebellion against the status quo. Inspired by feminism and the politics of sexual liberation, they contest binary notions of gender and disrupt patriarchal values. Physical beauty is examined alongside social dynamics.

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Contact Us

For sales enquiries please contact:
sales@stephenfriedman.com

For further details please contact:
info@stephenfriedman.com

For press enquiries:
press@stephenfriedman.com

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The exhibition also features a focus section on Grenadian-British painter, Denzil Forrester, conveying the breadth of his subjects which are inspired by his love of dub and reggae music in the dancehall clubs of 80's London. The pulsating, energetic movement of his figures are reinforced with vibrant colours and frenetic brushstrokes.

Notes to editors

Jonathan Baldock has two UK solo exhibitions opening in September 2023 at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Yorkshire and Charleston (Southover House), Sussex.

Sarah Ball was included in group exhibitions at the Long Museum, Shanghai, China and Xiao Museum of Contemporary Art, Rizhao City, China (2022).

In 2023, Denzil Forrester has had two major solo exhibitions at Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, Missouri and ICA Institute of Contemporary Art Miami, Florida.

Sky Glabush will have a touring solo exhibition organised by the Museum London, Ontario in 2024.

In 2024, Yinka Shonibare CBE RA will participate in the '60th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia', Venice, Italy. Shonibare was commissioned to create a series of new works for Sharjah Biennial's 30th anniversary in February 2023.

Yooyun Yang has a solo show at Primary Practice in Seoul, Korea until 23 September 2023.

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Stephen Friedman Gallery represents exceptional artists from around the world. Since its inauguration in 1995, the gallery has been based in London on Old Burlington Street, Mayfair. In October 2023, Stephen Friedman Gallery will expand and relocate to Cork Street, Mayfair. The new location will be designed by award-winning London architectural firm David Kohn Architects. Later in the year, the gallery will open its first space outside the UK in Tribeca, New York. It will be designed by Trimble Architecture.