

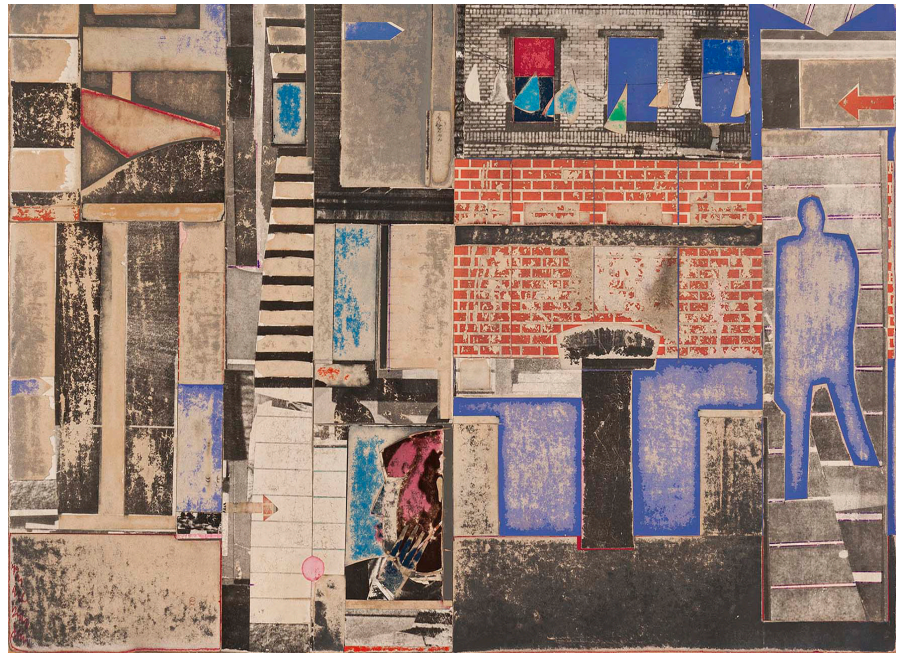
# Stephen Friedman Gallery

## Talisman in the Age of Difference

Curated by  
Yinka Shonibare MBE

5 June - 21 July 2018

Private view  
Monday 4 June, 6-8pm



Stephen Friedman Gallery presents the exhibition 'Talisman in the Age of Difference' curated by pioneering British artist Yinka Shonibare MBE.

This exhibition is a journey of encounters that explores ideas of magic and subversive beauty in work by artists of African origin and across the diaspora and artists who empathise with the spirit of African resistance and representation. Presenting an eclectic and surprising range of works, the exhibition includes painting, sculpture, drawing and other objects from the early twentieth century to the present day.

A talisman is thought to possess transformative energy as with a lucky charm, fetish, amulet, mascot, totem, idol or juju. The featured artists transform perception and materials into a form of talisman, a manifestation of protest and difference.

The civil rights movement and identity politics are explored by a number of artists here. Others pursue an alternative path in their shared search for originality, spirituality and the sublime.

As with his own practice, Shonibare has selected artists who make provocative work that consciously belies a subversive and political message and does not necessarily conform to a western vision of art.

For artists such as Genevieve Gagnard and Deborah Roberts, this is the first time they have shown in the UK. Rebellious, combative themes run through the works of these two artists who shake the foundations of tired, long held beliefs about black identity.

The transformation of an everyday material reflects its power to act as a totem or mascot. Leonardo Drew reconfigures materials into wall-based reliefs which appear to have a magical purpose. Melvin Edwards uses steel to commemorate historical civil rights violations against African Americans, whilst the work of Beauford Delaney, Jacob Lawrence and William Pope. L illustrates the simultaneous complexity and beauty of African American life.

The work of David Hammons, John Outterbridge and Betye Saar is characterised by the transformation of cultural objects into magical, fetishistic assemblages. Similarly, William Kentridge's powerful work confronts South African politics and history with a lyrical and poetic expressionism. South African born artist Marlene Dumas' unflinching and emotionally charged portraiture explores sexuality and death. Kehinde Wiley reimagines history to unpack the present: a talismanic alteration of history, where contemporary black bodies are rendered with regal majesty. Zanele Muholi's portraits of transwomen and non-binary models strikes an empowered note of joy. Similarly, in Samuel Fosso's photographic self-portraits the artist poses as key historical African figures.

Zak Ove and Kendell Geers make sculpture that bridges western art tropes and African cultural references. Jake & Dinos Chapman's series 'The Chapman Family Collection' combines ethnographic artefacts with McDonald's characters to critique the mechanics of globalisation. Irvin Pascal produces playful self-portraits on wood which evoke historical artefacts. Thomas J Price's sculptural studies and the painted portraits of Derrick Adams seek to re-position how the black male is perceived.

Romare Bearden's cubist inspired collages, Abe Odedina's magical paintings on panel, Armand Boua's scene paintings and Jeremiah Quarshie's hyper-realistic paintings present the black body as authentic and sometimes poetic allegories of everyday life. Hassan Hajjaj's photographs fuse fashion photography with Moroccan cultural references to unpack perceptions of North Africa. Mickalene Thomas questions the conventions of beauty, contesting art historical portrayals of women. Portia Zvavahera's magical realist paintings are taken from real-life and rendered in exuberant colour.

Lubaina Himid, Isaac Julien and Hew Locke examine Britain's colonial past, just as Larry Achiampong's series 'Glyth' critiques contemporary Britain.

Like Shonibare, all of these artists value art as a talisman: a vehicle for change. At the heart of the exhibition, Shonibare is asking, 'Can political art truly convey the power of its subject? Can art that is unconventionally beautiful be a form of resistance?' 'Talisman in the Age of Difference' seeks to answer these questions.

### Gallery Hours

Tuesday to Friday, 10am–6pm  
and Saturday, 11am–5pm

### Social Media

Facebook: /Stephen-Friedman-Gallery  
Instagram: @stephenfriedmangallery  
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#SFGTalisman

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Responding to the themes in the exhibition and its long-term commitment to the work of Yinka Shonibare MBE, Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts) has compiled a reading list of exhibition catalogues, artist monographs and publications in the collection of Stuart Hall Library. The list covers subjects such as contemporary African art, diaspora, fetishism, ritual, and includes most of the artists present in the exhibition.

Iniva's Stuart Hall Library is free and open to all and its collection can be easily accessed through the online catalogue. You can consult the complete list at the link below or by scanning the QR code below. You can also visit the library during our opening hours Tuesday-Friday 10am-5pm, Saturday 12-6pm.



We are also delighted to announce that American writer Antwaun Sargent has written a critical essay in response to the exhibition that can be found on the Talisman in the Age of Difference exhibition page on our website. You can read the essay by scanning the QR code below.



### Artist List:

Larry Achiampong (British / Ghanaian), Derrick Adams (American), Ghada Amer (Egyptian), Benny Andrews (American), Michael Armitage (British / Kenyan), Romare Bearden (American), Armand Boua (Ivorian), Frédéric Bruly Bouabré (Ivorian), Sonia Boyce (British), Jake & Dinos Chapman (British), Beauford Delaney (American), Leonardo Drew (American), Marlene Dumas (South African), Melvin Edwards (American), Samuel Fosso (Cameroonian), Genevieve Gaignard (American), Kendell Geers (South African), Hassan Hajjaj (British / Moroccan), David Hammons (American), Lubaina Himid (British), Kudzanai-Violet Hwami (Zimbabwean), Isaac Julien (British), William Kentridge (South African), Abdoulaye Konaté (Malian), Jacob Lawrence (American), Hew Locke (British), Whitfield Lovell (American), Zanele Muholi (South African), Wangechi Mutu (Kenyan), Otobong Nkanga (Nigerian), Abe Odedina (Nigerian), Temitayo Ogunbiyi (American), John Outterbridge (American), Zak Ové (British), Irvin Pascal (British), William Pope. L (American), Thomas J Price (British), Jeremiah Quarshie (Ghanaian), Faith Ringgold (American), Deborah Roberts (American), Betye Saar (American), Zina Saro-Wiwa (Nigerian), Mickalene Thomas (American), Bill Traylor (American), Kehinde Wiley (American), Portia Zvavahera (Zimbabwean)