

## Stephen Friedman Gallery

### Sasha Gordon: The Flesh Disappears, But Continues To Ache

Thursday 1 June - Saturday 22  
July 2023

Private view:  
Wednesday 31 May, 6–8pm

Gallery hours:  
Tuesday–Friday, 10am–6pm  
Saturday 11am–5pm



Stephen Friedman Gallery is pleased to present American artist **Sasha Gordon's** first solo exhibition in Europe.

Gordon paints surreal, anthropomorphic versions of herself in hyper-realistic detail. The artist uses these doppelgängers to explore the complexity of her identity as a young, queer, Asian-American woman. Her practice recalls the erotic, highly charged paintings of Paul Cadmus and his documentation of gay life in early 20th-century New York. Gordon's work also resonates with Caroline Coon's crisp-edged paintings and Amanda Ba's unsettling figuration.

In this new body of work, Gordon depicts herself in an unusual array of material forms, transposing her physical characteristics into animal, botanical and even geological features. Through these avatars she portrays the othering of unconventional human bodies and examines her own experiences of alienation, whilst challenging the logic of certain limiting social norms.

One painting portrays the artist as living topiary, her body covered from head-to-toe in painstakingly rendered green leaves. Recalling classical depictions of Aphrodite, the goddess of sexual love, the figure stands in a contrapposto pose and preserves her modesty with two well placed hands. This conventional image of female beauty is threatened by another version of the artist who brandishes a large pair of gardening shears (alarmingly close to the figure's genitalia – a tongue-in-cheek allusion to lesbian sex). Gordon celebrates the interloper's body by stripping her of clothing, using naturalistic skin tones to accentuate her curves in a further challenge to conventions of femininity.

In another work, Gordon transforms herself into a cat, exploring the artist's burgeoning awareness of being queer. Gordon explains: "Cats are domestic animals; they are controlled by their owner yet simultaneously have a mind of their own. The painting portrays my difficulties with my sexuality, experiencing compulsive heterosexuality and not understanding why." Here, the artist uses anthropomorphism to analyse, and learn from, complicated elements of her psyche.

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## Contact Us

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Gordon also tackles misogyny and the demonisation of women's emotions. While anger among men is typically perceived as a manifestation of strength or power, in women it is often labelled a sign of instability. Instead, the artist claims her right to express rage, reimagining herself as an erupting volcano; gritting her teeth, she paints herself overflowing with lava-like emotion.

Projecting herself into bizarre, dream-like scenarios, and disrupting entrenched notions of gender and sexuality, Gordon turns traditional figuration firmly on its head.

## Notes to editors

### Sasha Gordon

Sasha Gordon (b. 1998, Somers, New York) lives and works in New York. She graduated from The Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), Providence in 2020. Gordon is represented by Matthew Brown Gallery, Los Angeles. She is currently working towards her first institutional solo exhibition at Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami opening later this year.

Solo exhibitions include 'Hands of Others', Jeffrey Deitch, New York (2022) and 'Enters Thief', Matthew Brown Gallery, Los Angeles (2021). Her work was recently in a group show at Rudolph Tegnors Museum in Dronningmølle, Denmark in the summer of 2022. Museum collections include Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

## 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. The gallery 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.

In Autumn 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.