

# Stephen Friedman Gallery

Evening Standard

Art lovers, get set! The exhibitions to see when London galleries open

Nancy Durrant

1 April 2021

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The terrific accidental wheeze which means that, as 'non-essential retail' (argue that one, philosophers) commercial art galleries are able to open on-slash-not-before April 12 is a boon to those of us who have sorely missed strolling round white spaces looking at things we don't quite understand and are mildly terrified to find out the price of. In all seriousness, there's a fantastic crop of exhibitions coming up at London's stellar for-profit art spaces, and they're absolutely free to wander into. From Damien Hirst (inevitably) to John Akomfrah, Sandra Mujinga to Thomas Demand, these are the shows you should be seeing come the first week of the spring awakening.

#### Damien Hirst: Fact Paintings and Fact Sculptures



Image: Notre-Dame on Fire, 2019. Damien Hirst and Science Ltd

The idea of representing reality is behind Hirst's long-running series of 'fact' works, which range from photorealistic paintings to a life-size tea cart (a reference to the snooker tournaments he attends with his pal Ronnie O'Sullivan). This show, which kicks off a solid year of Hirst exhibitions at the

Britannia Street space (crikey), will feature some older but mostly unseen works created in his studio over the last 15 years. Gagosian Britannia Street, from April 12

#### Rachel Whiteread: Internal Objects



Image: Detail of Doppelgänger, 2020-21. Rachel Whiteread

After a 40-year career based on the casting and revealing of the insides of things, from the underside of chairs to the space within an entire house, Rachel Whiteread has done a handbreak turn and switched to the skin and bone of an object. This show of new sculptures is centred on two new works, hand-built by the artist and resembling the skeletons of dilapidated sheds. It's a bold move, and a rather beautiful one. Gagosian Grosvenor Hill, from April 12

#### Jessica Rankin



Image: Strange Currents EA, 2020. Jessica Rankin

The Australian artist Jessica Rankin appropriates methods traditionally associated with women's work (embroidery and needlework) and incorporates them into her painting practice, creating 'mental maps' that explore notions of memory, intuition and interpretation. Previously her gorgeous, gestural work has evoked landscape - this new body of work represents a shift towards abstraction. White Cube Bermondsey, from April 12

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## Park Seo-Bo



Image: Ecriture No 071208, 2007. Park Seo-Bo

A highly influential contemporary Korean artist and educator, Park Seo-Bo is considered the father of the *Dansaekhwa* ("monochrome painting") movement, which evolved in South Korea in the late 1970s. Despite its aesthetic similarity to Western minimalism, it's actually much more about a return to nature and materiality, and Park's own practice is rooted in the spiritual philosophies of

Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. Just what we need to recalibrate. White Cube Bermondsey, from April 12

## Gilbert and George: New Normal Pictures



Image: PRIORITY SEAT 2020. Gilbert and George

Possibly the antithesis to the restful work of Park Seo-Bo is this cheerfully loud series of 26 new paintings by London's favourite living sculpture, Gilbert and George. This new series follows the pair on a sort of Pilgrim's Progress on foot through the streets of London, charting its changes,

gentrification and redevelopment as they head to the city's eastern edges. White Cube Mason's Yard, from April 12

## Allez la France!

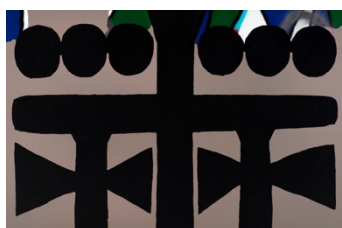


Image: Graff Under Vendu by Jin Angdoo. Jin Angdoo

Only the second show at this ballsy young gallery that opened mid-pandemic in October last year on London's iconic Cork Street. Run by Phoebe Saatchi Yates (whose art pedigree is right there in her name) and her husband Arthur Yates, it aims to give high level representation to artists not taken from the

usual pools. This show of four French artists, a collective who normally make their impressive work on walls which get painted over the next day, speaks well of their eye and the gallery's future. Saatchi Yates, April 12 to May 15

## Sabine Moritz: Mercy

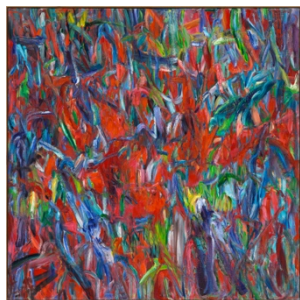


Image: Sabine Moritz Flow IV, 2020. Sabine Moritz

New paintings, works on paper and, for the first time, photographs, reflect on the political, economic and environmental shifts of the past year through the lens of series, sequence and abstraction (don't we wish we could all do that, it feels like it might be more palatable somehow). As a whole, they explore the dynamics of memory - but they're also genuinely beautiful. Pilar Corrias, from April 12

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## Charles Gaines: Multiples of Nature, Trees and Faces



Image: Numbers and Faces: Multi - Racial/Ethnic Combinations Series 1: Face #13, Ellen Yoshi Tani (Japanese/Irish/Danish/English). Charles Gaines

The American conceptual artist Charles Gaines' first ever solo show at the gallery comprises two new series of plexiglass grid works that reflect his fascination with structures and rules-based systems. His Numbers and Trees series continues a long-standing body of work that methodically plots images of trees to examine their structural form, while his new Faces series maps faces of people who identify as multi-racial over each other to explore political and cultural notions of representation. It's a lot to get your head around but it's also gorgeous to look at. Hauser & Wirth, from April 12

## Ugo Rondinone: a sky. a sea, distant mountains. horses. spring.



Image: A work from a sky . a sea . distant mountains . horses . spring . Ugo Rondinone, courtesy Sadie Coles HQ, London

The New York-based Swiss sculptor Ugo Rondinone's work never fails to cheer me up. This new exhibition of sculptures and paintings continue several themes in his practice - time, nature, renewal and the psyche - which meditates with wit and good cheer (day-glo colours are a frequent characteristic; this show includes 15 sculptures of horses cast in blue glass) on everyday life and the world. Sadie Coles HQ, from April 12

## Sue Williamson: Testimony



Image: It's a pleasure to meet you brings together the children of two men killed by apartheid police. Sue Williamson

This is the first solo exhibition in the UK for the British-South African artist Sue Williamson and presents a sort of mini-retrospective of work from the 1990s to today. One of a pioneering generation of artists who stood up against the apartheid regime, Williamson uses many media, from video to sculpture and installation, to powerfully explore South Africa's history and ideas of trauma, memory and identity. A must-see. Goodman Gallery, from April 12

## John Akomfrah: The Unintended Beauty of Disaster



Image: A still from The Unintended Beauty of Disaster. Courtesy Smoking Dogs Films and Lisson Gallery

One of the most consistently interesting artists working in video today, John Akomfrah creates meditative reflections on our collective consciousness (his Stuart Hall Project is still one of my favourite artworks of all time which is a lot for a 96 minute film about a cultural theorist). This new body of work, featuring footage filmed over the last six months, responds directly to the events of 2020, most notably the Black Lives Matter protests and demonstrations against imperialist monuments. Lisson Gallery, April 13 to June 5

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## An Infinity of Traces



Image: Sola Olulode, Laying in the Grass III. Courtesy Lisson Gallery

Sitting alongside Akomfrah's exhibition will be this group show, curated by the writer and curator Ekow Eshun, featuring UK-based established and emerging Black artists whose work explores notions of race, history, being and belonging through a variety of media. With the likes of Alberta Whittle, Ayo Akingbade, Jade Montserrat and Ufuoma Essi, it promises to be fascinating. Lisson Gallery, April 13 to June 5

## Threadbare



Image: Huguette Caland, Inaash (dress #7), 1970. Huguette Caland

This group show of new and historical works from Jonathan Baldock, Huguette Caland, Jeffrey Gibson and Tau Lewis explores and challenges questions of identity, gender, sexuality and race through the transformative and performative qualities associated with textiles via their connection with the body. Wit and playfulness provide a way into multi-layers of meaning and narrative. Stephen Friedman Gallery, April 13 to May 15

## Sandra Mujinga: Spectral Keepers



Image: Spectral Keepers. Sandra Mujinga. Courtesy the Artist and The Approach, London

The eeriest show you're likely to see this spring, Sandra Mujinga's installation at the Approach gallery is inspired by the world-building practices in video games, science-fiction novels and Afrofuturism. It's also very, very green, which sounds restful but isn't, and works, as related to the green screen of movies, as a proxy for blackness - a non-colour; a camouflage; hypervisible but invisible at the same time. Approach, April 13 to May 1

## Melanie Smith: Leave it to the Amateurs



Image: Vortex by Melanie Smith. Melanie Smith

Surprisingly, this is only Melanie Smith's second solo exhibition in the UK, though she has exhibited widely internationally. Working across painting, film and performance (and often combinations of those) she explores notions of modernity in relation to art history and contemporary society. Her remotely directed new film, Vortex, and associated works pulls apart the picture plane in the creation of a sort of tableau vivant based on William Blake's The Circle of the Lustful (1824-27). Parafin, April 13 to June 26



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## Not Vital; Robert Rauschenberg



Image: Robert Rauschenberg's Bounders (Phantom), 1991. Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

Two shows at the gallery strip the world down in different ways. A series of portraits unseen in the UK by the Swiss artist Not Vital reduce their subjects (often well-known figures such as Nina Simone or Mahalia Jackson) to the interplay of light and dark using a limited greyscale palette. Alongside these sits a show of Robert Rauschenberg's Night Shades and Phantoms, made as part of his decade-long experiments painting on metal, making them seem to flicker in and out of existence. Thaddaeus Ropac, April 13 to May 26 (Vital) and July 31 (Rauschenberg)

## Thomas Demand



Image: Nursery, 2020. Thomas Demand

Thomas Demand's large-scale photographs are never quite what they seem - this body of work blends and blurs the natural and the artificial and considers the role of models in how we structure the world. Images of lily ponds and indoor plant nurseries are meticulously constructed out of paper, shot and then destroyed; the images themselves consider the crossover of technology and nature. Another series looks at the working paper models used in the atelier of the designer Azzedine Alaïa, known for his architectural forms. Sprüth Magers, April 13 to May 15

## Michael Landy Break Down: 20 Years

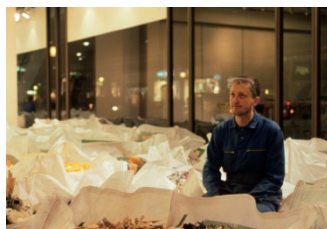


Image: Michael Landy contemplating the destruction of his own life in 2001. Michael Landy. Courtesy the artist, Thomas Dane Gallery and Artangel

It was "like witnessing my own funeral" Michael Landy later said about his seminal work Breakdown, in which he publicly destroyed all his possessions (from a single tea bag to a Saab) in the old C&A building on Oxford Circus. To mark 20 years since, Thomas Dane Gallery is mounting a display of archive material alongside documentary photographs by Wolfgang Tillmans which are exhibited for the first time. Thomas Dane, April 13 to June 6

## Arturo Herrera: From This Day Forward



Image: Untitled, 2020. Arturo Herrera

An homage to collage from the Venezuelan artist, continuing his examination of modernist legacies and visual culture with a group of new works created from images gleaned from popular culture, alongside immersive wall painting and bookmaking in his fourth exhibition at the gallery. Thomas Dane, April 13 to June 6

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## Markus Lüpertz



Image: Jason's Abschied (Jason's Farewell), 2020. Markus Lüpertz

The influential German painter presents a new body of work returning (as many painters have before him) to the theme of Arcadia. His gestural, expressionist works pull figures from Italian Renaissance and Dutch Golden Age paintings, give them identities as characters from Greek mythology and place them into idyllic landscapes, often inspired by the surroundings of his studio in Märkisch Wilmersdorf, Germany. Michael Werner, April 13 to May 15

## Frank Walter



Image: Untitled (Abstract Triangles, Red, Yellow, Black and Silver). Courtesy Kenneth M Milton Fine Arts

This is the first solo exhibition in London by the late Antiguan artist - Francis Archibald Wentworth Walter, self-styled 7th Prince of the West Indies, Lord of Follies and the Ding-a-Ding Nook, to give him his proper title. A remarkably talented painter, if deeply eccentric (not, of course, mutually exclusive) Walter created a vast body of work (in addition to writings and sound recordings) over six decades on materials from wood, to Masonite, and using oil paint, tempera, watercolour, crayon, pencil, shellac, and glitter. A real treat. David Zwirner, from April 15