

# Stephen Friedman Gallery

## Threadbare

Jonathan Baldock | Huguette Caland | Jeffrey Gibson | Tau Lewis

13 April – 15 May 2021



Stephen Friedman Gallery is pleased to present a group exhibition of new and historical works by **Jonathan Baldock, Huguette Caland, Jeffrey Gibson and Tau Lewis**. Challenging issues such as identity, gender, sexuality and race, the works in 'Threadbare' explore the transformative and performative qualities associated with textiles through their inherent connection with the body.

**Jonathan Baldock's** recent work uses puppetry, quilt-making and embroidery to reveal the malleable quality of the human body and its connection with the inner psyche. Baldock believes "in the power of making things through the bringing together of head and hand," contesting the sentimentality associated with craft and the hand-made. Originally commissioned for his solo exhibition at Kunsthall Stavanger in 2020, 'Eating feelings (a conversation)' captures a pair of life-sized marionettes engaged in animated dialogue. Assuming the role of puppet master, Baldock breathes life into inanimate forms by using casts of his own body and arduous physical processes such as hand-embroidery. Seated on ceramic stools, the couple appear frozen in motion with their arms outstretched in wild gesticulation. Chris Bayley observes that Baldock's "marionettes seem to rebel and resist their innate abilities of what it means to be a puppet, proposing potential for agency from the viewer's imagination."

**Huguette Caland's** exploration of abstraction is underpinned by her use of the human body. Her playful engagement with eroticism is manifested in a series of kaftans the artist made in the 1970s that directly challenge taboos associated with the representation of female sexuality. While living in Beirut in the 1960s, Caland rejected the western-influenced fashions worn by her peers in favour of loose-fitting kaftans inspired by the abaya, a form of traditional Arabic dress. At a time when the emphasis was on being tall and thin, Caland offered a liberating embrace of the female physique for women who did not conform to these societal pressures. In this vein, the dresses on view in 'Threadbare' conceal the body, instead drawing attention to abstract embroidery and detailed crochet patterns animated by the wearer's movement. Dynamism is also explored in Caland's 'Rossinante' series of works on paper that depict amorphous shapes contorting into anthropomorphic poses. Obsessive repetition of lines and dots accentuates this sense of movement. These drawings come to life in an accompanying group of sculptures in which ink is replaced by interlocking areas of thread, paper and wire. Displayed in succession, they seemingly dance across the floor.

# Stephen Friedman Gallery

## Gallery Hours

Tuesday to Saturday, 11am-5pm

## Social Media

Facebook: /Stephen-Friedman-Gallery

Instagram: @stephenfriedmangallery

Twitter: @SFGalleryLondon

## Contact Us

For sales enquiries please contact:

sales@stephenfriedman.com

For further details please contact:

info@stephenfriedman.com

For press enquiries:

Carlotta Dennis-Lovaglio at

carlotta@scott-andco.com

Communications Manager:

Alana Pryce Tojcic at

alana@stephenfriedman.com

Drawing on his Choctaw-Cherokee heritage, **Jeffrey Gibson's** work engages Native American materials and process in relation to popular culture. His work in 'Threadbare' combines intricate indigenous artisanal handcraft – applied in wearable garments, beadwork and patterned quilts – with narratives of contemporary resistance in protest slogans and song lyrics. This “blend of confrontation and pageantry” is reinforced by what Felicia Feaster describes as a “sense of movement and performance as if these objects... are costumes waiting for a dancer to inhabit them.” Gibson harnesses the power of such materials and techniques to activate overlooked histories, while also embracing the presence of marginalized identities in today's society. A hand-beaded bird constructed from recycled trainers has its wings outstretched as if mid-flight, representing a sense of optimism and hope for change.

**Tau Lewis** sews, builds and assembles intricate sculptures and quilts that engage with personal and historical trauma. Using found materials such as recycled leather, the artist explores the transference of energy and emotion that occurs when an object is made by hand. Responding to the legacy of the Black diaspora, Lewis's recent textile works – described by the artist as “celestial bodies” – act as spiritual conduits between the past, present and future. The transformative quality of Lewis' work speaks to her interest in outsider artists from the Black South. She explains that “objects [which] come from the post-slavery era are made largely out of debris and refuse and garbage. I consider them fossils containing the emotional generational DNA of the entire community. I believe that by studying certain art objects and tendencies toward new thinking in the black community, you can learn a lot about mobility, pictorial memory, trauma and how to recover.”

*Stephen Friedman Gallery would like to thank Jonathan Baldock; Brigitte Caland, Malado Francine Baldwin and Ric Flaata; Jeffrey Gibson, Bill Singer and Brian Barlow; and Tau Lewis and Davida Nemeroff for their kind assistance in helping to realise the exhibition.*

## Jonathan Baldock

Jonathan Baldock was born in 1980 in Kent, UK. He lives and works in London. Baldock graduated from Winchester School of Art with a BA in Painting (2000-2003), followed by the Royal College of Art, London with an MA in Painting (2003-2005).

Baldock has forthcoming solo exhibitions at La Casa Encendida, Madrid, Spain in July 2021 and at Accelerator, Stockholm, Sweden in October 2021.

Baldock's first solo exhibition with Stephen Friedman Gallery opened in September 2019 and presented a series of ceramic masks featuring bright colours and outlandish expressions. This show coincided with the presentation of a large-scale, interactive sculpture by Baldock at Fitzrovia Chapel, London during Frieze week. In the spring of 2019, Baldock's solo exhibition 'Facecrime' opened at Camden Arts Centre, London, UK following a Freeland's Lomax Ceramics Fellowship. The exhibition toured to Tramway, Glasgow, UK in August 2019 and opened at Bluecoat, Liverpool, UK in March 2020.

Other notable solo and two-person exhibitions include 'Me, Myself and I', Kunsthall Stavanger, Norway (2020); 'LOVE LIFE: Act 3', De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill, UK (2017); 'LOVE LIFE: Act 2', Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool, UK (2017); 'There's No Place Like Home', Southwark Park Galleries, London, UK (2017); 'LOVE LIFE: Act 1', PEER, London, UK (2016); 'The Soft Machine', Chapter Gallery, Cardiff, Wales, UK (2016) and 'A strange cross between a butchers shop and a nightclub', Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge, UK (2013). Baldock's work recently entered the Arts Council Collection, UK.

# Stephen Friedman Gallery

## Huguette Caland

Lebanese artist Huguette Caland was born in Beirut, Lebanon in 1931. Caland's first institutional exhibition in the UK took place at Tate St Ives, Cornwall in 2019. Her work has featured in Sharjah Biennial, United Arab Emirates (2019); Venice Biennale, Italy (2017); Made in L.A. at Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, California (2016) and Prospect New Orleans, Louisiana (2014–2015). Caland had a major retrospective exhibition at Beirut Exhibition Center, Lebanon in 2013. The artist's most comprehensive solo museum exhibition to date will open at The Drawing Center, New York in June 2021.

Caland's work is found in major public collections including Tate, London, UK; British Museum, London, UK; Centre Pompidou, Paris, France; Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, France; Fondation National d'Art Contemporain, France; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, California; San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, California; Palm Springs Museum of Art, Palm Springs, California; Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, Los Angeles, California and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas.

## Jeffrey Gibson

Jeffrey Gibson is a Choctaw-Cherokee artist, born in Colorado, USA in 1972. He lives and works in the Hudson Valley in New York. Gibson's works are in the collections of major institutions including Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts; Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada; Nasher Museum of Art, Durham, North Carolina; Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, Kansas; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas and Denver Art Museum, Denver, Colorado.

Most recently, Gibson had a major solo exhibition of new work at Brooklyn Museum, New York in 2020. Gibson had a solo exhibition at Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art, New York in 2018 which toured to Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, Texas in 2019. Denver Art Museum hosted a mid-career survey exhibition of Gibson's work in 2018 which travelled to three other institutions between 2018 and 2019.

Other notable solo shows include SCAD, Savannah, Georgia (2016); National Academy Museum, New York (2013); Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Massachusetts (2013) and Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Winter Park, Florida (2013).

Gibson has participated in 2019 Whitney Biennial; Greater New York (2015–16); Prospect New Orleans, Louisiana (2014); Everson Museum of Art Biennale, New York (2016) and SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico (2016). Gibson has been awarded a MacArthur genius grant (2019) and is a member of the faculty at Bard College; a Joan Mitchell Grant recipient (2013) and past TED Foundation Fellow (2012).

## Tau Lewis

Tau Lewis was born in 1993 to a Jamaican-Canadian family in Toronto, Canada and currently lives in Brooklyn, New York. In 2021, Lewis will exhibit at Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Grinnell College Museum of Art, Grinnell, Iowa; Prospect 5, New Orleans, Louisiana; and National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada (solo). In late 2022, her work will be included in a group exhibition at ICA Boston, Massachusetts and a solo exhibition is scheduled for 2023 at Hayward Gallery, London, UK.

Lewis' work can be found in the collections of National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives, Ottawa, Canada and Grinnell College Museum of Art, Grinnell, Iowa. For Yorkshire Sculpture International 2019, Lewis presented her first solo exhibition outside North America at The Hepworth Wakefield, Wakefield, UK. She has previously exhibited at Oakville Galleries, Oakville, Canada (2020); College Art Galleries, Saskatoon, Canada (2019); Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, Canada (2018); New Museum, New York (2017); Art Gallery of Mississauga, Mississauga, Canada (2017); MoMA PS1, New York (2017) and Art Gallery of York University, Toronto, Canada (2017).