

Frieze New York

Booth B6, 5 – 7 May 2017



Image: **Kara Walker**, *Spectators*, 2014
Ink, watercolour and cut paper on paper
127 x 96.5 cm 50 x 38 in

Victoria Miro presents monochrome works by **Doug Aitken, Varda Caivano, Stan Douglas, Elmgreen & Dragset, Alex Hartley, Secundino Hernández, Christian Holstad, Isaac Julien, Yayoi Kusama, Conrad Shawcross, Do Ho Suh, Sarah Sze, Kara Walker** and **Francesca Woodman**.

Following its prescient autumn 2016 exhibition *Protest*, of historical and contemporary works by artists who address issues such as migration, censorship, conflict, struggles for equality and democracy, the gallery's presentation at Frieze New York continues this discussion and includes a number of works that, through image, composition, gesture, material, form or concept, serve as meditations on contemporary socio-political issues or as calls to action – inspiring consideration of possibilities for a life of freedom and unity, an insistence on human rights, and continued debate and dialogue around the immediate social and political issues that confront our global community.

In the series of works on paper *Tell Me Your Thoughts on Police Brutality Miss 'Spank Me Harder'*, 2015, **Kara Walker** conflates different eras, idioms and attitudes to explore racism, its symbols and legacy from the American Civil War to recent killings and assaults that have fuelled the Black Lives Matter campaign. Exaggeration, absurdity and shock may be part of Walker's creative arsenal, yet she deploys these in order to point to where real injustices and obscenities lie – as profoundly in the present as in the past. Kara Walker is included in *The American Dream: Pop to the Present* at the British Museum, London (until 18 June 2017) and the forthcoming exhibition *Blue Black* (9 June – 7 October 2017) curated by Glenn Ligon at the Pulitzer Arts Foundation, St Louis, Missouri. This summer, she will create a site-specific exhibition for the DESTE Project Space on the island of Hydra (20 June – 30 September 2017).

The ways in which words are altered by context is a theme explored by **Sarah Sze**. When elements of *Calendar Series*, 2013 – an installation that includes three months' worth of *New York Times* cover pages whose photographs have been excised and replaced with images of sea, sky, earth, ice and fire – were rejected by censors ahead of its inclusion in a biennial in China, rather than withdraw Sze created *Calendar Series China Revision*, 2015, applying strips of black acrylic paint to cover the content proscribed by the censors – all news references to China. In a further iteration of the work, as seen in *First Monday*, 2016, and *Third Wednesday*, 2016, Sze represents the same *New York Times* covers, redacting all the written content *except* for references to China. Sze's immersive installation for the 96th Street station of the Second Avenue Subway, New York City, opened on 1 January 2017. The installation *Sarah Sze: Timekeeper* is currently on view at Copenhagen Contemporary, Denmark (until 3 September 2017). Sze will take part in *Glasstress 2017* at Palazzo Franchetti, Venice (11 May – 26 November 2017).

In *Hockey Fight, 1951*, 2010, **Stan Douglas** presents a precisely measured conflict, in which a brawl has broken out amongst two spectators of an unseen hockey game. The image, shot from above in an unnerving, unfamiliar perspective, so that only tops of trilby hats and slicked-back hair can be seen leaves only two identifiable facial expressions to be seen amongst the mass; that of the grimacing, contorted fighter laid on his back, and the calm, focused interest of a female onlooker. The work is drawn from Douglas' acclaimed *Midcentury Studio*, a series of large-scale monochrome photographs in which the artist defies straightforward story telling conventions in

favour of more elaborate constructed narratives in a questioning of authorship and reality. Douglas is the recipient of the 2016 Hasselblad Award.

An example of his *eraserhead* works (1996-ongoing), so-called because of the method the artist has developed by taking clippings from newspapers and selectively erasing and redrawing elements of the image, **Christian Holstad's** *The Land is Burping Up Blood*, 2005, transforms the newspaper page to hint at layers of meaning hidden beneath the surface of received, media-sanctioned culture. Holstad's exhibition *Cult of Personality* is at the Alvin Sherman Library, Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, Florida (until 28 May 2017).

Derived from his seminal work *Looking for Langston*, 1989/2017 – a lyrical exploration of the private world of Langston Hughes (1902 – 1967) and his fellow black artists and writers who formed the Harlem Renaissance during the 1920s – **Isaac Julien's** *Pas de Deux No. 2 (Looking for Langston Vintage Series)*, 1989/2016, revisits and expands upon aspects of the original film and its multilayered narratives of memory and desire, expression and repression. *Looking for Langston* was made when the AIDS crisis was at its height and several of its actors died after the film was made. For Julien, photographs such as *Pas de Deux No. 2 (Looking for Langston Vintage Series)*, act as 'memorial sites', sometimes revealing facts behind his fictions, at other times going deeper into a moment of contested history. Isaac Julien's "I dream a world" *Looking for Langston*, an exhibition of newly-conceived, large-scale and silver gelatin photographic works and archival material, will be on display at Victoria Miro (18 May – 29 July). A special presentation at Somerset House during Photo London (18 – 21 May) features photographs presented as both large-scale works and silver gelatin prints, accompanied by an installation of the award-winning film. His nine-screen projection *Ten Thousand Waves*, 2010, will be part of the opening displays at Zeitz MOCAA, Cape Town (from 22 September 2017).

In text works such as *1980*, 2011, **Doug Aitken** reclaims the commercial landscape of signage in order to underscore the cultural potency of language. The artist has described his sculptural text pieces as possessing a 'toughness' that echoes the abbreviated nature of much contemporary communication. At the same time, these works move beyond language, breaking down into abstraction. Terse, yet slippery in meaning, they function as provocative statements, inviting us to consider shared historical moments. *Mirage*, 2017, Doug Aitken's site-specific contribution to *Desert X* in Palm Springs, California, is on view until 31 October 2017. A video installation of his Underwater Pavilions project, produced by Parley for the Oceans and presented in partnership with The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MOCA), will be on display as part of *Unlimited* at Art Basel 2017 (15 – 18 June 2017).

Throughout their career, **Elmgreen & Dragset** have redefined the way in which art is presented and experienced. Drawn from *The Named Series*, the surfaces of which consist of white wall paint carefully removed from prominent museums and public galleries by professional conservators and applied to canvas, works such as *Hayward Gallery*, 2012, lend new significance to a typically disregarded 'background', simultaneously drawing on the history of the readymade and the legacy of Minimalism. Their *Self-Portraits*, 2015, are representations of museum wall labels of other artists' works, including Barry Le Va and Nicole Eisenman, among others. While wall labels ordinarily are not an integral part of a work of art, the artists have appropriated and transformed them into art works in their own right – over-sized and constructed from some of the most art-historically time-honoured materials, such as marble. The title of these works signal a personal layer of reference, in which each title relates to a special experience or emotional development in the artists' own lives. They question what a 'self-portrait' can be in our current cultural climate. In a similar vein, *Couple, Fig. 23*, 2017, a pair of diving boards attached vertically to a wall, assumes figurative connotations, while making reference to Minimalist art, as well as to the duo's large-scale public work *Van Gogh's Ear*, 2016, an upright, nine-metre-high swimming pool in the shape of an ear, which was displayed outside the Rockefeller Center in New York in 2016. Material transformation and gallows humour meet in *Second Attempt*, 2013, a snapped noose made of patinated bronze presented on a white marble base. Elmgreen & Dragset's major exhibition *Die Zugezogenen (The Newcomers)* is at Museum Haus Lange, Kunstmuseen Krefeld, Germany (until 27 August 2017). They are included in *The Beguiling Siren is Thy Crest* at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw (until 18 June 2017), *No Place Like Home* at The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (until 29 July 2017) and will curate the fifteenth edition of the Istanbul Biennial (16 September – 12 November 2017).

Works by **Yayoi Kusama** reflect her lifelong preoccupation with the infinite and sublime, as well as the twin themes of cosmic infinity and personal obsession as found in pattern and repetition, which can be traced back to the hallucinations of multiplying dots and nets which she first experienced in childhood. *SOLITUDE OF THE EARTH*, 1994, is an installation comprising two white chairs, a table and a cabinet covered in objects and white netting. It evokes a fetishistic response to female paraphernalia and the trappings of domesticity, while echoing the labour-intensive work of stitching sewing or knitting. Covered with a proliferating pattern of dots, eyes, faces in profile and frond-like forms, the painting *People I Love*, 2009, distils the themes and obsessions that characterise Kusama's art, while encapsulating a surreal and humorous, as well as instinctual approach to art making. The retrospective *Yayoi Kusama: My Eternal Soul* is at The National Art Center, Tokyo (until 22 May 2017). *Yayoi Kusama: Infinity Mirrors*, the most significant North American tour of Kusama's work in nearly two decades is currently at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (until 14 May 2017). It will subsequently travel to Seattle Art Museum (30 June - 10 September 2017), The Broad in Los Angeles (October 2017 - January 2018), Art

Gallery of Ontario (March - May 2018) and the Cleveland Museum of Art (July - October 2018). *Yayoi Kusama: Life is the Heart of a Rainbow* opens at the National Gallery of Singapore in June (9 June – 3 September 2017).

In *VDL ii (North East Elevations)*, 2016, **Alex Hartley** brings together photographic and painterly elements to examine the idea of the boundary – between interior and exterior, private and public space, manmade and natural environments, two and three dimensions, object and image. Classic examples of modernist domestic architecture, photographed by Hartley in Los Angeles, form the basis of this monochrome wall-based work in which the photographic image and hand-painted elements – describing and embellishing the verdant West Coast landscape – are separated by a layer of semi-transparent Perspex. Hartley's major installation and public project, *The Clearing*, opened in March 2017 in the grounds of Compton Verney Art Gallery and Park, Warwickshire, and will continue until the end of the year. He will take part in the Yokohama Triennale 2017 (4 August – 5 November, 2017).

Paintings by **Secundino Hernández** are energised through linear dynamism and derived in part from a process of removing paint with a pressure washer. Almost archaeological in nature, this method involves the artist erasing pigment to expose the canvas beneath. Redolent of the urban environment, the resulting 'wash' paintings have a dramatic, exploratory quality and openly display the triumphs and struggles of the artist's practice. Hernández will be included in the Royal Academy *Summer Exhibition*, London (13 June – 20 August 2017). He will create a new, large-scale work for *Unlimited*, Art Basel 2017 (15 – 18 June 2017).

Varda Caivano's works are similarly exploratory in character. It is possible to view *Untitled*, 2015 in procedural terms, for in Caivano's art there is always a palpable, enlivening sense of the artist making decisions or changing course. Equally strong, though, are suggestions of landscapes or objects, actual things in the world or those filtered through the canon of twentieth-century art. Her work is thus held in careful balance between the intense focus of its making and endless associativity it inspires. Caivano will be included in the Royal Academy *Summer Exhibition*, London (13 June – 20 August 2017).

Paradigm Exploded, 2015, and *Paradigm Optic (Stainless)*, 2017, are part of **Conrad Shawcross's** ongoing exploration of the four-sided tetrahedron. Works from the *Paradigm* series elicit a subtle line between structure and nature, the metaphysical and the molecular and make reference to the notion of the paradigm shift – a leap of imagination that jolts scientific enquiry forwards. Both *Paradigm Exploded*, its mirrored surfaces reflecting and refracting its surroundings, and *Paradigm Optic (Stainless)*, which makes use of a disruptive surface recently developed by the artist that draws on maritime camouflage, Cubism and Op Art, convey movement through stasis, in addition to addressing sculpturally paradoxical ideas of entropy and disappearance. A brand new commission by the artist will feature in the upcoming exhibition *Into the Unknown: A Journey Through Science Fiction* at the Barbican Centre (3 June – 1 September 2017). Other current institutional exhibitions include *The Universe and Art* at ArtScience Museum, Singapore and *Socle du Monde Biennale 2017* at Herning Museum of Contemporary Art, Denmark.

Constructed from white fabric, works from **Do Ho Suh's** *Exit Series*, 2016 – replicas of household fixtures and fittings such as lightbulbs, doorknobs and entry buzzers – appear ghostly, like the sloughed skin of a reptile, seeming almost to disappear from view. Suh's work always stems from the measuring of space and the processes, rational yet sensual, that enable him to determine and connect with his surroundings. Marking Suh's permanent departure from his New York residence after twenty years the *Exit Series* speaks to memories associated with the apartment he first moved into in 1997, and to the warm relationship between the artist and his former landlord. Do Ho Suh was recently awarded the Ho-Am Prize for the Arts. A major exhibition of his signature architectural works is currently at Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Wisconsin (until 14 May 2017). He is included in *No Place Like Home* at The Israel Museum, Jerusalem (until 29 July 2017) and will take part in *Art Night 2017*, a festival of contemporary art in collaboration with the Whitechapel Gallery, London (1 July 2017).

Photographs from the series *Untitled, Providence, Rhode Island, 1975-1978, Untitled, New York, 1979-80* and *Untitled, MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, New Hampshire, 1980*, by **Francesca Woodman** reveal the artist's body in various stages of transformation, deformation, alteration and effacement. In some images Woodman quite literally becomes one with her surroundings, with the contours of her form blurred by movement, or blending into the background, wallpaper or floor, revealing the lack of distinction of both – between figure and ground, self and world. In others she uses her physical body literally as a framework in which to create and alter her material identity. An exhibition of works by Francesca Woodman from the Sammlung Verbund collection in Vienna is currently on display at Museo Patio Herreriano, Valladolid, Spain (until 7 May 2017). Her work is included in *Gravity & Grace* at Aspen Art Museum, Colorado (until 11 June 2017). The major touring exhibition *Francesca Woodman: On Being an Angel* continues at The Finnish Museum of Photography, Helsinki (24 August – 15 October 2017).

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