

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PEDESTRIAN PROFANITIES

Curated by Eric N. Mack



29 OCTOBER – 12 DECEMBER 2020
OPENING: THURSDAY 29 OCTOBER, 12 – 7 PM
SIMON LEE GALLERY, NEW YORK

**SUSAN CIANCIOLO, ABIGAIL DEVILLE, SAMUEL HINDOLO, ANDY ROBERT, CINZIA RUGGERI, SECTION 8,
TOREY THORNTON, KANDIS WILLIAMS**

I began to notice that the experience of walking on the street or being in the theater or around any group of people - that mass. No matter how colorful it was...never looked tonal and nothing was particularly outstanding. Someone might be wearing a very bright tie or green shoes but somehow it was absorbed...

- Robert Rauschenberg

Simon Lee Gallery, New York is pleased to present *Pedestrian Profanities*, a group exhibition of interdisciplinary artists, designers and polymaths curated by Eric N. Mack, which explores the relationship between fine art, design and fashion, and the ways in which they are activated by a participating body.

This show is about the event of walking down the avenue.

The role of a mannequin in a storefront is to elicit a direct relationship between the consumer, their body and the garment; to engender a sense of its structure. In a similar way, the role of the viewer in the act of observing, or consuming, an artwork bestows value and radiant spirit: the art object, at its most sacred, should reflect altered systems of value, especially in observation of our world's brutalities. In contemplating either artwork or clothing, the viewer enacts a sense of embodiment outside of their-self – an act of transference.

This exhibition imagines a case for the painted object to flee its support structures and need the body. To cling to the body, worn as smuggled modernity.

- Eric N. Mack

In Mack's own immersive practice, the artist reconciles non-traditional attitudes to painting with architectural nuance, directly negotiating the disjoin between art and fashion, and investigating the ways in which each discipline intersects with and informs the other. Drawing on his own aesthetic conceptions, in *Pedestrian Profanities* Mack brings together a group of artists and designers that likewise grapple with notions of use and commodity value in their practices, interrogating consumption in the process, as well as questioning the ways in which aesthetics live with the body.

In common with Mack, each artist in this exhibition bridges the divide between performance, art, architecture and fashion, bypassing traditional function in favor of psychological connection, emotional communication and formal innovation. In the work of Cinzia Ruggeri, a surrealist sensibility transforms the viewer's experience of embodied space; her interactive practice, and in particular her fashion design of the 1980s, invites us to reconsider our position in the world. Similarly, Susan Cianciolo's collage and textile-based practice reflects on her experiences operating as a designer outside of the mainstream fashion industry, which she turned on its head with a holistic approach to a range of creative projects. Made with found materials, Torey Thornton's mixed media abstractions gather a myriad of materials with personal associations for the artist. Volume and texture are central facets of their process, which, like Mack's work, straddles the boundary between painting and sculpture.

Both Abigail DeVille and Samuel Hindolo engage with forgotten or unknown histories. DeVille's site-specific works are constructed from a tapestry of found objects that intrinsically connect the art object to its site of exhibition. Exploring material culture, the artist is fundamentally concerned with reclaiming the abandoned, overlooked and making the invisible visible. By contrast, Hindolo's work is figurative yet fictive, constructing scenes from the artist's own image archive that are nonetheless equally absorbed in the illumination of peripheral or misunderstood figures. Kandis Williams' collages confront issues of race, representation and the lived experience of the human body. Like in DeVille's work, the dense layering of content in works such as *co-response-ability with/for the unknown Other*, 2019-20, is haptic and expressive, while bringing structure to complex themes.

Working predominately as a stylist and creative director, Akeem Smith, founder of clothing label SECTION 8, has been a key figure in defining fashion's underground through his use of cross-cultural references and striking imagery, which seeks to smash gender and beauty ideals. His deeply personal approach investigates the slippages between memory, archive, and history, and, in turn, the weight of visibility and representation, and lately his creative language has found new forms of expression: *'I've found there are a lot of limitations with styling and designing, but when creating what I would consider a sculpture, there is much more freedom.'*

Like many of the artists in this exhibition, painter Andy Robert has a deeply personal and experimental approach to his medium. Working on the edge of representation, photographs of people and places he sees in Harlem every day, are taken apart and put back together again through the expressive and experimental possibilities of paint. His approach to painting negotiates how a contemporary image is made, understood and seen – its contextualization. His paintings and works on paper reflect private and public conversations, a sense of community and isolation, and above all absorb voice, narrative and witness of life in the metropolis.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Susan Cianciolo was born in 1969 in Rhode Island, NE and lives and works in New York, NY. After completing her studies at the Winchester School of Art, UK in 1990 she obtained her BFAs in 1991 at Parsons School of Design, Paris, France and in 1992 at Parsons School of Design New York, NY. Cianciolo has completed artist residencies at the Siena Art Institute, Siena, Italy and The Anni and Josef Albers Foundation, Bethany CT. Her work has been shown extensively internationally and has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, including *Spirit Guides: Paintings 1990 - 2020*, Bridget Donahue, New York, NY (2020); *GOD LIFE: Modern House on Land Outside Game Table*, South London Gallery, London, UK (2019); *RUN church*, RUN Restaurant, Run Store, Modern Art, London, UK (2017); *Dressing for God*, Yale Union, Portland, OR (2016); *if God COMes to visit You, HOW will you know?* (the great tetrahedral kite), Bridget Donahue Gallery, New York, NY (2011); *RUN Restaurant*, Alleged Gallery, New York, NY (2011); *Purple Mountains and a Lilac Sky*, Gallery Side 2, Tokyo, Japan (2009) and *Drawing for Neu Life*, Sears Peyton Gallery, New York, NY (2003). Her work has been included in group exhibitions at The Japan Society, New York, NY (2020); LX Arts, New York, NY (2019); CCS Bard Hessel Museum, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY (2018); Balice Hertling, Paris, France (2018); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY (2017); Akademie der Kunst, Berlin, Germany (2016) and MoMA PS1, Long Island City, NY (2015). Her work belongs to CCS Bard Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York, NY.

Abigail DeVille was born in 1981 in New York, NY and works in Bronx, NY. She received her BFA from the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, NY and her MFA from Yale School of Art, New Haven, CT. In 2018 DeVille was the recipient of the United States Artists Fellowship. In 2017 she was awarded the Rome Prize by the American Academy in Rome and completed residencies at the American Academy in Rome, Italy and the Rauschenberg Residency, Captiva Island, FL. Internationally renowned, DeVille's work has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions and including *No Space Hidden (Under Heaven)*, University Of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI (2020); *The American Future*, Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR (2018); *Chaos or Community?*, Michel Rein, Brussels, Belgium (2017); *No Space Hidden (Shelter)*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, USA (2017); *Only When It's Dark Enough Can You See The Stars*, The Contemporary, Baltimore, MD (2016); *America*, Michel Rein, Paris, France (2015); *Invisible Men: Beyond the Veil*, Galerie Michel Rein, Paris, France (2015) and *Material Histories*, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY (2014). Her work has been included in group exhibitions at Punta della Dogana, Venezia, IT (2020); National Museum of Women in Arts, Washington, DC (2018); Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (2017); Hauser & Wirth, Los Angeles, CA (2016) and The 55th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2013). Her work belongs to major private and public collections including Kadist Art Foundation, San Francisco, CA; USA Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Paris, France; Kaviar Factory, Henningsvaer, Norway; The Bronx Museum of the Arts, Bronx, NY and The Studio Museum in Harlem, Harlem, NY.

Samuel Hindolo was born in 1990 in Cheverly, MD and lives and works in New York, NY. He received his BA from the University of Maryland, College Park, while he is currently pursuing an MFA in painting at Bard College in Anandale-on-Hudson, New York. Hindolo's work has been presented in several exhibitions including *Lip and Neck*, 15 Orient (2020); *(Nothing But) Flowers*, Karma (2020); *Bridge-s*, Saint Heron at the Getty Museum (2019); *Condo London*, Chapter NY at Carlos Ishikawa (2019); *Honda Full O Cousins*, Deli Gallery (2018); *Opaque Poetics*, Wysing Arts Centre (2017); and *After Now*, Rosenwald Wolf Gallery (2017).

Andy Robert was born in 1984 in Les Cayes, Haiti and lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. He received his BFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD and his MFA from the California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA. Robert is the recipient of numerous awards, residencies and grants including the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Artist Grant, New York, NY (2020); MacDowell Colony Fellowship, Peterborough, NH (2020); Foundation for Contemporary Arts Roy Lichtenstein Award, New York, NY (2019); Artist in Residence, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY (2016-17); Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Residency, Skowhegan, Maine, NY (2016); and the Whitney Independent Study Program, New York, NY (2015). Recent solo exhibitions include *LAKOU: One Two Fifth*, Hannah Hoffman Gallery, Los Angeles (2017). Significant group shows include the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, IL (2020); Hammer Museum, University of California, Los Angeles, CA (2019); Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR (2018); and The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY (2016). His work is included in the permanent collection of the Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo, Norway; Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; and the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, Chicago, IL.

Cinzia Ruggeri (1942-2019) was born in Milan, Italy where she continued to live and work. She received her education from the Accademia delle Arti Applicate, Milan, Italy. Internationally renowned, Ruggeri's work has been the subject of numerous exhibitions and projects including *...Per Non Restare Immobili*, Casa Masaccio Center for Contemporary Art, San Giovanni Valdarno, Italy (2020); *Déconnexion*, Campoli Presti, Paris, France (2019); *Finché si scherza*, Galerie Francesca Pia, Zürich, Switzerland (2019); *Umbratile con brio*, Galleria Federico Vavassori, Milan, Italy (2018); *CIN CIN 1980-2015*, 10 Corso Como, Milan, Italy (2015); *Extra Vacanze di Cinzia Ruggeri*, Galleria Tucci Russo, Turin, Italy (1986); *Per Un Vestire Organico*, Palazzo Fortuny, Venice, Italy (1983) and *Cinzia Ruggeri*, Galleria del Prisma, Milan, Italy (1960). Her work has been presented at ETH Zurich - gta Exhibitions, Zurich, Switzerland (2019); Palazzo Reale, Milan, Italy (2018); Triennale di Milano, Milan, Italy (2015); Salone del Mobile, Milan, Italy (1988); Kaufhof Stores, Cologne, Germany (1988); Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, NY (1987); Fashion Institute of Technology, New York, NY (1985); Palazzo Fortuny, Venice, Italy (1983); La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, La Jolla, CA (1982) and the 39th Edition of the Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (1981). Her work belongs to major private and public collections including Museo della Moda Parma, and Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

SECTION 8 was founded by Akeem Smith, born in 1991 in Brooklyn, NY. He lives and works between Brooklyn, NY and Kingston, Jamaica. Smith has spent over a decade sharing a voice deeply shaped by his childhood experiences working with his family's fashion house, OUCH, which designed looks for prominent members of Kingston's dancehall community and did costuming for the films *Dancehall Queen* (1997) and *Belly* (1998). As an artist and creative director, Smith has been an influential collaborator with artists, brands such as Deana Lawson, DIS, Helmut Lang, Hood by Air, K8 Hardy, Lizzie Fitch and Ryan Trecartin, The Row, Yeezy, musicians Total Freedom and Physical

Therapy, sculptor Jessi Reaves, jewellery designer Brando and deigner Grace Wales Bonner. *No Gyal Can Test* at Red Bull Arts, New York, NY (2020) is the artist's first major solo exhibition.

Torey Thornton was born in 1990 in Brooklyn, NY and lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. They received their BFA from Cooper Union in New York, NY. Internationally renowned, Thornton's work has been the subject of numerous exhibitions and projects including, *Subdominium Edges Y Assumed Legalities*, Modern Art, London, UK (2019); *Sir Veil*, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY (2016); *Rapport Vroom*, Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, IL (2016); *Kneed a Sea Ware Groin*, Modern Art, London, UK (2015). Major group exhibitions include *Dirty Protest: Selections from the Hammer Contemporary Collection*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2019); *Eckhaus Latta: Possessed*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, USA (2018); *Trip of the Tongue*, curated by Piper Marshall, Simon Lee Gallery, Hong Kong (2017). Their work belongs to major private and public collections including Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, AL; The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, PA; Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami, FL; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Marciano Art Foundation, Los Angeles, CA; Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, NC; The Rachofsky Collection, Dallas, TX; Rubell Family Collection, Miami, FL; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY and Zabludowicz Collection, London, UK.

Kandis Williams was born in 1985 in Baltimore, MD and lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. She received her BFA from Cooper Union School of Art, New York, NY. Williams' work has been the subject of a number of solo exhibitions, projects and performances, including *Eurydice*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2020); *Fusing Ethics and Aesthetics*, the work of CASSANDRA Press, KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2019); *The Rivers of Styxx*, Cooper Cole, Toronto, Canada (2018); *A Woman's Work: An Evening of Lectures and Performances*, MoMA, New York, NY (2018); *Soft Colony*, Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2016); *Disfiguring Traditions*, SADE, Los Angeles, CA (2016); *Inner States*, St. Charles Projects, Baltimore, MD (2016); *Red Square*, OTTOZOO Project, Milan, Italy (2012) and *The Vesica Dialectic*, Ficken 3000, Berlin, Germany (2009). Major group exhibitions include the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2020); Wignall Museum of Contemporary Art, Rancho Cucamonga, CA (2019); Frye Art Museum, Seattle, WA (2018); Kunstquartier Bethanien, Berlin, Germany (2017); The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY (2015); Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy (2015) and The Underground Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2015).

About Eric N. Mack

Born in 1987 in Columbia, MD, Eric N. Mack lives and works in New York, NY. He received his BFA from The Cooper Union, New York, NY and his MFA from Yale University, New Haven, CT. In 2017, Mack was the recipient of the inaugural BALTIC Artists' Award and completed artist residencies at the Rauschenberg Residency, Captiva Island, FL and Delfina Foundation, London, UK. His work has been shown extensively internationally and has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions including Scrap Metal Gallery, Toronto, Canada (2019); *The Power Station*, Dallas, TX (2019); Brooklyn Museum, New York, NY (2019); Simon Lee Gallery, London, UK (2018); BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK (2017); Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY (2017). Major group exhibitions include Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY (2019); *Desert X*, Coachella Valley, CA (2019); Serpentine Gallery, London, UK (2019); Kunsthalle Basel, Basel, Switzerland (2017); Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, Massachusetts, MA (2017); Pulitzer Arts Foundation, St Louis, MO (2017); Camden Arts Centre, London, UK (2016); and MoMA PS1, Long Island City, NY (2015).

About Simon Lee Gallery

Founded in London in 2002, Simon Lee Gallery represents artists of diverse generations whose practices explore a wide range of media, from sculpture and painting to video and photography, and who share a broad interest in an exploration of the conceptual. Aiming to provide a significant international audience for its artists, the gallery also regularly punctuates its programme with historical exhibitions and curated group shows, which present shifts in contemporary art practice and thought, whilst broadening the dialogue with artists outside of the gallery's core programme. In addition to its UK activity, in 2012 the gallery opened a space in Hong Kong, which introduced its artists to a wider public in Asia, with a fully independent programme. In 2014, Simon Lee Gallery opened an office and private viewing space in New York. In 2017, this space was re-launched with a year-round programme of exhibitions and events, showcasing the work of emerging and established artists in dynamic group and solo exhibitions.

Visiting Simon Lee Gallery

Simon Lee Gallery's focus is first and foremost on protecting our visitor's health and wellbeing as you visit the gallery. As such, we have implemented a booking system to ensure that social distancing is safely exercised at all times.

SIMON LEE

Please email ny@simonleegallery.com to reserve a time to attend the private view event or, to visit the gallery throughout the duration of the exhibition.

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www.simonleegallery.com

Image: Kandis Williams, *co-response-ability with/for the unknown Other*, 2019-20, Xerox collage and ink on paper, framed, 106.7 x 132.6 cm (42 1/8 x 52 1/4 in.) Courtesy of the artist and Night Gallery, Los Angeles.

For further press information, images and requests please contact Julia Kelly Kennedy: julia@simonleegallery.com or +44 (0) 207 491 0100.