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Where the threads are worn

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Press Release

Casey Kaplan is pleased to present “Where the threads are worn,” a group exhibition featuring work by twenty-five artists: Igshaan Adams, Yuji Agematsu, Francis Alÿs, Romare Bearden, Kevin Beasley, Louise Bourgeois, Jordan Casteel, Rachele Dang, N. Dash, Jason Dodge, Haris Epaminonda, Sacha Ingber, Brian Jungen, Caroline Kent, Cindy Ji Hye Kim, Hannah Levy, Mateo López, Tammy Nguyen, Diego Perrone, Mariana Garibay Raeke, Loïc Raguénès, Simon Starling, Diamond Stingily, Johanna Unzueta, and Ella Walker.

“Where the threads are worn” aims to define a beloved, yet unceremonious place by exploring the promise of safe entry within a physical or immaterial setting. To render “home,” the artists in the exhibition consider the experience of self-location, often an elusive pursuit. To truly understand, they must reflect on what is felt and cannot be seen, nor identified. As Igshaan Adams articulates after examining a friend’s aged prayer rug – “Look, there’s where the threads are worn through... A recording of the imprint of his body over all those years, acting on its surface, leaving its mark. This imprint might even outlast the person.” Within its perimeter, a physical home bears witness to familial dwelling, silently recording actions from birth through adulthood. Even still, memory and illusion inevitably bend the fabric of those walls and reveal shadows in their wake.

Spanning photography, sculpture, painting, video, and employing disparate media such as woven beads, daily city residue, worn clothing, animal hide, hair, oil paint, adobe, and silicone, the works in the exhibition share stories of belonging, loss, and renewal, giving form to cultural memory and bringing to life raw and honest experience. Caroline Kent’s stretched canvases convey the abstractness of language, evoking the sensation of both something intimate and foreign. Where language fails, images arise and ultimately serve as an immaterial conduit for a physical place. Rachele Dang’s installation, “House on Cannonball Street,” fuses personal childhood memories in Honolulu, HI with violent histories of ecological imperialism. A felled tree trunk, based on the cannonball tree, is shown alongside a botanical carrier used by colonialists to transport pillaged samplings for study, illustrating “a continuum of displacement” through the lifespan of a single, harvest seed.

“Home” is not an offer of permanence, but rather a changing landscape that evolves within the scope of personal and collective experience. Within “zip: 09.01.18 . . . 09.30.18,” Yuji Agematsu takes part in a ritualistic gathering of litter in an attempt to both document the daily machinations of New York City and to celebrate the intimate stories that permeate these discarded items. As time flexes, the inhabitants change too. Mariana Garibay Raeke’s painting of a torso depicts a body contorted under the weight of human experience. In her work, the body is a place of dwelling and a carrier of memory, serving as the epicenter for physical and intangible transformation.

A small 1985 oil and charcoal composition by Louise Bourgeois reveals a modest, sloped home; its simplicity is defined by its lack of windows and desolate setting. Perhaps in reference to the artist’s turbulent adolescence between the two World Wars, Bourgeois’ house appears as if it is floating away in an undercurrent of rough waters. In searching for this illusory place of home, the path turns inward, and maybe we, ourselves, are what we have been looking for all along.

“Where the threads are worn” is organized by Emily Epelbaum-Bush, Veronica Levitt, and Rosie Motley.