

ADAM PENDLETON

Drawings

57 rue du Temple, 75004 Paris

5 November 2021 – 8 January 2022

Preview: 5 November 2021, 6 – 9 p.m

Galerie Max Hetzler is pleased to announce *Drawings*, **Adam Pendleton's** second solo exhibition with the gallery, and first in Paris. Further works by the artist will be on view in a group exhibition at Galerie Max Hetzler in Berlin from 4 November.

In his paintings, drawings, and other works, Pendleton uses letters, words, drips, splatters, sprays, and collected images as primary materials. His work is a kind of continuous writing, in which language and gestural marks are recorded, transposed, and overwritten. Blurring the edges between modes of viewing and reading, between representation and abstraction, and between painting, drawing, and photography, Pendleton's work is a visual philosophy of incomplete postulates. In 2008, he began to articulate his work through the idea of *Black Dada*, a visual project and ever-evolving inquiry into the relationships between blackness, abstraction, and the avant-garde.

The *Black Dada* drawings, displayed on a black wall in the first gallery of Galerie Max Hetzler, Paris, put the remainders of Pendleton's studio process back into circulation. Masked and cut fragments of spray-painted text, splatters, and drips are photographed and silkscreened in black onto black paper, while one or two uppercase letters, set in Arial Bold, are superimposed onto each of the resulting compositions. The letters—A, B, C, D, L and K—belong to the phrase "BLACK DADA." As in Pendleton's earlier *Black Dada* works, the letters have been extracted from a source text—an initial, limited sequence—and placed into new arrangements, preserving the positions of the missing letters as gaps.

Rather than spray paint, earlier works in the *Black Dada* series made use of cropped, photocopied reproductions of conceptual artist Sol LeWitt's *Incomplete Open Cubes* (1974), whose permutations of partial geometric objects doubled the combinatorial logic of Pendleton's fragmented language. In the newer works, the broken series of letters unfolds as a parallel operation over the spray paint formations, full of delays, false starts, and echoes. The compression of the two operations, of neutral type and gestural lettering, establishes a polyrhythmic space.

In the main gallery a series of large drawings on Mylar feature the phrase "WHO IS QUEEN." The text, its lettering irregularly wrapped within the boundaries of the frame, has been inscribed and composited multiple times, using various methods and inversions. Spray paint and brushwork form textured fields of marks and drips that shadow, envelop, and overlap the language. The phrase is also the title of Pendleton's concurrent exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.



Adam Pendleton, *Untitled (Who Is Queen Collages)*, 2021

sheet: 43,2 x 33 cm; 17 x 13 in.

photo : Courtesy Adam Pendleton

Pendleton poses “WHO IS QUEEN?” as a question of identity, and, to some extent, frames it as an undecidable question, a phrase which—in its nonspecific reiteration—inhabits the absence, in the final analysis, of any certainty of identity. The term Queen has a number of meanings and connotations, particularly in gay slang, in which queen refers positively, humorously, or pejoratively to an ostentatiously effeminate man. Pendleton leaves the language open, allowing differences to proliferate in repetition.

Adam Pendleton (*1984, Richmond, VA) lives and works in New York. His work is held in public collections including The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; and Tate, London, among others. His current exhibition *Who Is Queen?*, at MoMA in New York, opened in September and will be on view until 21 February 2022.

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