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Gagosian to Present Titus Kaphar Exhibition in Beverly Hills

Opening on September 13, *Exhibiting Forgiveness* Presents New Paintings That Inspired the Artist's Debut Feature Film, Premiering in Theaters on October 18



Titus Kaphar, "So vulnerable", 2023, oil on canvas, 120 × 108 inches (304.8 × 274.3 cm) © Titus Kaphar. Photo: Owen Conway

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Exhibiting Forgiveness points at hope without diminishing the challenges of forgiveness.
—Titus Kaphar

BEVERLY HILLS, September 3, 2024—Gagosian is pleased to announce *Exhibiting Forgiveness*, an exhibition of new paintings by Titus Kaphar at the gallery in Beverly Hills. Shown here for the first time, this group of paintings is featured in the artist's first narrative feature film, *Exhibiting Forgiveness* (2023), which debuted at Sundance this year and will be released theatrically nationwide on October 18.

The semi-autobiographical *Exhibiting Forgiveness* stars André Holland as Tarrell Rodin, an accomplished painter whose life is upended by an unexpected reunion with his father, La'Ron (John Earl Jelks), a recovering addict who hopes to rebuild a relationship with his estranged son. Tarrell,

now an active and loving father and husband, is skeptical despite the encouragement of his mother. Written and directed by Kaphar, *Exhibiting Forgiveness* follows his documentary shorts *Shut Up and Paint* (2022, shortlisted in the Documentary Short Film category of the 95th Academy Awards) and *The Jerome Project* (2016)—the latter of which was inspired by a painting series initiated in 2014 exploring the artist’s relationship with his own estranged father. *Exhibiting Forgiveness* is a direct, though fictionalized, extension of *The Jerome Project*.

In addition to portraits, the *Exhibiting Forgiveness* paintings depict figures, façades of neighborhood houses, personal objects, and ephemera. These are emotionally and intellectually charged pieces. The paintings preceded the film; as Kaphar says, “they spring from the same personal, emotional and psychological well” that is the source for all his work. Combining a mastery of oil painting techniques with application of heterogenous mediums and innovative methods, Kaphar challenges conventional representation to provoke deep contemplations of family, community, and memory. Painting some canvases in highly saturated palettes and draining others of color, he combines gold leaf with tar—suggesting both divine transcendence and being stuck. Kaphar renders grief and loss, obscuring bodies, or removing them outright with knife-cut excisions. What remains is a testament to how we continue to live despite our wounds.

Large-scale paintings of homes in a working-class American community, with figures in their foregrounds, employ vivid purples, reds, blues, and yellows related to the colors of the series *From a Tropical Space* (2020). These are joined by works such as “*Bad memories more saturated than good ones*” (2023), in which an overburdened truck serves as an emblem that recapitulates childhood trauma. The painting itself is an ethical statement, honoring the community that carries the wounds of our past. The beauty of the environs is not just a fact, it is a reminder of all that exists—sweet and bitter—in this community. The conversation between the film and the paintings is vital; the film testifies to the power of art as a medium for the intellectual and spiritual labor that is necessary for healing. The paintings, each titled with a line from Kaphar’s screenplay, speak to how art is rooted in the trials of everyday life.

The paintings capture people, places, and incidents from the past and present, images that signpost *Exhibiting Forgiveness*’s characters, symbolism, and plot. Portraits are emblematic of changing relationships between family members: “*For your prayer closet*” (2023)—an icon composed with gold leaf and layered tar that stems from *The Jerome Project* paintings—shapes the film’s culminating scene. Flashback sequences directed by Kaphar physically incorporate the paintings of neighborhood views, moving them through on-screen space—a transitional device that conveys the protagonist’s state of mind as he comes to terms with his past. Together, the exhibited works reveal an expansion of Kaphar’s compositional and narrative strategies, exploring the ways in which humans find forgiveness and move forward.

Gagosian is publishing a book that illustrates the paintings in the exhibition, includes extensive stills from the film, and presents a draft of the script with the artist’s notes and deleted scenes. It provides a behind-the-scenes look into the conception and development of *Exhibiting Forgiveness*, and offers insights into Kaphar’s practices as a painter and filmmaker.

Titus Kaphar was born in 1976 in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and lives and works in New Haven, Connecticut. Collections include the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Brooklyn Museum, New York; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; Pérez Art Museum Miami; Seattle Art Museum; and National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia. Exhibitions include *Selections from Asphalt and Chalk*, MoMA PS1, New York (2015); *UnSeen: Our Past in a New Light*, National Portrait Gallery, Washington, DC (2018–19); *Knockout*, Legacy Museum, Tuskegee University, AL (2019–20); *Redaction*, MoMA PS1, New York (2019); *Suffering from Realness*, MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA (2019–20); and *The Jerome Project*, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston (2022–23). Kaphar is the recipient of awards including the Gwendolyn Knight and Jacob Lawrence Fellowship (2009), Rappaport Prize (2018), and MacArthur Fellowship (2018).

#TitusKaphar

TITUS KAPHAR

Exhibiting Forgiveness

Opening reception: Friday, September 13, 5-8pm

September 13–November 2, 2024

456 North Camden Drive, Beverly Hills

Press

Gagosian

press@gagosian.com

Hallie Freer

hfreer@gagosian.com

+1 212 744 2313