

Thomias Radin
Old Soul - New Soul
November 8 – December 14, 2024
Esther Schipper, Seoul

Esther Schipper, Seoul is pleased to announce **Old Soul - New Soul**, Thomias Radin's first solo exhibition with the gallery and in South Korea. On view will be seven new paintings in hand-carved artist frames, two sculptural works, and the artist's debut film, **RIVÂL**, which will make its Asian debut. **RIVÂL** is a film by Radin, Alexander Brack and Matthias Meisen.

Regardless of the medium, Radin's practice is centered in an embodied knowledge formed by his background in dance as well as by growing up between the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe and France. For Radin, the Black subjects of his paintings, sculptures, performances, and films are carriers of memory and movement. Movement that tells a story of deep spirituality, inherited, linked to ancient knowledge, yet still evolving and alive.

Old Soul - New Soul ties into Radin's core belief in the importance of intergenerational knowledge and listening between one's elders as well as the new generation. The exhibition presents Radin's practice through painting, sculpture, and performance. On the first floor, in the window space, one encounters an installation composed of wooden dominoes and **Ka Spirit** drums. This installation establishes the distinctly Caribbean rhythm of the exhibition. The sculptures are hand-carved from wood decorated with figures and staining, and embellished with appliqués. In their very essence, these works are intergenerational, as Radin's uncle—a master in Gwo Ka music—first shapes the drum before the artist carves and paints it intricately by hand. The oversized dominoes also pay tribute to everyday life in Guadeloupe, as they remind us of the game played by people of all ages. Although deceptively simple in its rules, to play dominoes well requires both mathematic skills and cunning strategy.

On the second floor, Radin introduces us to dance and movement in the context of his paintings and the film **RIVÂL**. The paintings on this floor, such as **WEB: The link that connects us all**, combine Radin's interest in capturing fleeting movements. Unlike in a photograph or hyper realistic painting, the movements are not frozen in time with sterile detail. Instead, they are rendered fluidly in expressive brushstrokes that maintain the energy and potential of movement and dance. The film **RIVÂL** further showcases the artist's performative practice in the story of two rival dancers: Cibuqueira and Karukera, played by Radin and Andrege Bidiamambu. Throughout the film one sees the uncertain path of the dancers, who are migrants in a foreign country searching for their identities. For this very special presentation, Radin has created a site-specific installation of a hand-carved and -stained wooden arch. This special environment references the artist's childhood in a family of carpenters and creates a sort of living room in which visitors view the film.

The third floor moves from the terrestrial into the heavenly plane, with paintings that convey the idea of flight and gesture towards the idea of belonging to a larger

cosmology. **Chaviré, Soukouss, Liberation** is a diptych composed of two paintings and two hand-painted and -carved wooden wings. The title is written in Guadeloupien creole and translates to capsized, tremor, liberation. In it two figures bend backwards as if falling or dancing. As they fall, the masks also fall from their faces. With the addition of the wooden wings, one can imagine that they are either fallen angels, who lose their divinity upon reaching Earth, or that they are ascending into celestial forms.

Akin to an improvisational performance, Radin's painting process draws directly on his dance practice both formally and conceptually. The paintings often appear to be executed in broad dynamic gestures, their subjects appearing as if caught in mid-movement. Generally Black, young and masculine or androgynous, they are often seen only in fragments of muscular bodies. The figures are caught in momentary energetic poses and expressions of great physical prowess. Their movements are full of history and become instruments of storytelling. To the artist, dancers are engaged in a kind of spiritual communion, in a dialogue full of vulnerability and violence in which each gesture carries a meaning.

Thomias Radin was born in 1993 in Abymes, Guadeloupe. He received his BFA and MFA from the University of Rennes 2 in 2015 and 2018. The artist lives and works in Berlin.

Radin's solo exhibitions include: **Rhizome: Time of Revelation**, Kunstverein Göttingen (2024); **POLYCHROME - The Myth of Karukera & Cibuqueira**, Galerie Wedding, Berlin (2023); **Kimbé Rèd Pa Moli**, Steve Turner, Los Angeles (2022); **The Myth of Inner Landscapes**, SAWY Contemporary, Berlin (2019).

Amongst his group exhibitions are **The High Yellow Note**, Fondation Vincent van Gogh, Arles (2024); **TERRA DIASPORA – Welten Wandeln**, Kunstverein Göttingen, Göttingen (2024); **Poly: A Fluid Show**, KINDL- Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2023 – 24); **Embodied Spaces: The Body as Architecture**, Strada Gallery, New York (2023); **Les Enchantées**, Frontview, Berlin (2023); **The Garden**, The Curators Room, Amsterdam (2023); **Trangressive: Nonkonforme Zugänge zu Kunst and Stadt**, Kühlhaus Berlin, Berlin (2022); **Non Playable character, The Fairest**, 59th Venice biennale, Venice (2022); **Home Alone**, ATM Gallery, New York (2020); **Berlin-Lagos Mobility and Heritage**, Galerie Wedding, Berlin (2018).

Selected performances include **The Myth of a Trinity II**, KINDL - Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2023); **Oversea Riddim**, Deutsche Oper, Berlin (2023); **What a Time to Be Alive**, The Curators Room, Amsterdam (2022); **Gospel of Wealth: Monumental shadow**, Savvy Contemporary, Berlin (2021); **The Myth of a Trinity**, Oyou, Berlin (2020); **The Myth of a Trinity**, Temps fort, Saint Domineuc (2019); **The Myth of a Trinity**, Performing Arts Festival, K77 Studio, Berlin (2018).

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