

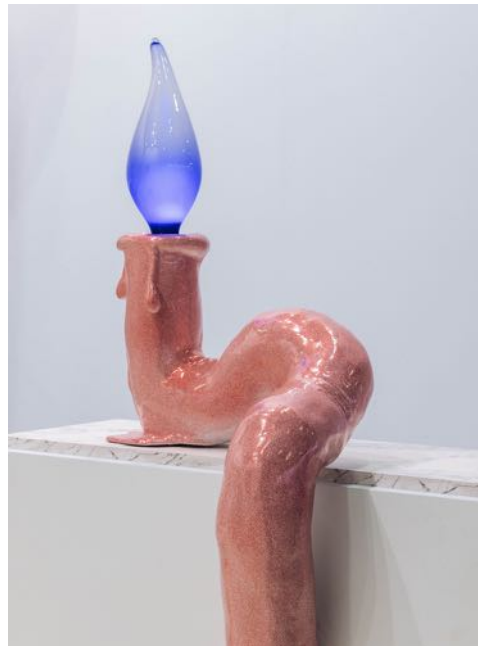
Press Release

An Uncommon Thread

Hauser & Wirth Somerset

8 February – 27 April 2025

Opening Celebrations: Saturday 8 February 2025



Featuring Rachael Louise Bailey, Max Boyla, KV Duong, Charlotte Edey, Nour Jaouda, Lindsey Mendick, Jack O'Brien, Nengi Omuku, Tai Shani and Georg Wilson.

The exhibition is in collaboration with Alice Black, Berntson Bhattacharjee, Carl Freedman Gallery, Gathering, Ginny on Frederick, Pippy Houldsworth Gallery and Union Pacific.

'An Uncommon Thread' features 10 contemporary artists living and working in the UK. The group exhibition highlights the transformative power of unconventional mediums in evoking personal and collective memories. Each artist demonstrates an unwavering commitment to the integral role materials and techniques play in their creative process; employing unexpected painting surfaces, adapting formal craft traditions and repurposing discarded products into compelling works. Through individual investigations of identity, tradition, nature, fantasy and the environment, the artists invite viewers to engage with the rich stories woven into each work.

This multidisciplinary exhibition follows 'Present Tense' (2024) and is part of an ongoing initiative at Hauser & Wirth Somerset that champions emerging and mid-career artists beyond Hauser & Wirth's roster. An events and learning program will run alongside the exhibition, engaging with key themes addressed throughout the galleries, driven by a curiosity and inventive approach to materiality and process.

The Bourgeois Gallery opens the exhibition with works by Nengi Omuku, Tai Shani and Jack O'Brien, exploring the complexities of human connection, social memory and historical narratives associated with place. Nengi Omuku divides her practice between Nigeria and London, blending western oil painting with Nigeria's textile craftsmanship. Omuku's works represent scenes of natural co-existence where otherworldly figures are

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ambiguous or in flux, removed from hierarchies of subject and habitat. Tai Shani weaves a cosmic realm in a new installation that continues to reimagine female otherness as a perfect totality. Shani's cacophony of colour, pattern and organic form immerse the viewer in an act of world-building in which feminism, the sublime and mythology merge. Jack O'Brien's erotically charged assemblages push their physical limits and instil a sense of temporality, or near collapse, evoking a tension between objects, materiality and architecture. O'Brien's sculptures harness disparate elements to challenge codes relating to the body and sexuality, as well as a collective moment in post-industrial London and the formal systems that surround us.



Max Boyla's large-scale satin works transition the viewer into the Rhoades Gallery, which features further works by the artist, as well as KV Duong, Nour Jaouda and Lindsey Mendick. The artists interrogate the symbolism inherent within their chosen medium, inviting the viewer to consider the material's source and composition, as well as preconceived associations. For Boyla, satin is the perfect canvas to consider environmental balance, a composite fabric made from both natural and non-natural materials. KV Duong's works on latex highlight the material's historical connection to French colonial rubber plantations in Vietnam, while simultaneously embracing its sensuality and symbolic association with the queer experience. Nour Jaouda creates sumptuously layered tapestries using fabrics found in markets near her home in Cairo, Egypt, redyeing and deconstructing the textile to reflect her rootless existence and continual movements between real and remembered locations. Through mythology, pathos and humour, Lindsey Mendick plays with the conventions of traditional ceramics and clay to unravel taboo topics and ruthlessly expose the human condition for what it is.

The Pigsty Gallery includes works by Charlotte Edey, Rachel Louise Bailey and Georg Wilson, highlighting the artists' interest in the concept of objecthood and iconography within their practice. Charlotte Edey blurs the boundary between the tangible and the represented, the frame and the window, in her surreal portals to imagined landscapes. Exploring her fascination with ritual, symbolism and the natural world, Edey's work feels both speculative and deeply attuned to our surroundings and the cadence of life. Similarly, Georg Wilson's canvases are directed by the cyclical change of the English seasons and folklore, woven out of ancient and contemporary customs through the lens of personal experience. In new works for this exhibition, Wilson incorporates iconography rooted in Somerset, drawing on the history and rich storytelling traditions of the South West. Rachael Louise Bailey's practice is guided by considerations of form, texture and matter, as well as an interest in working with found materials. Bailey's sculptures accommodate multiple layers of nuance, working with black oyster anchor bands as well as juxtapositioning an aeroplane engine fan cover with Hebridean fleece, all contributing to a powerful visceral experience.

The Workshop Gallery presents smaller scale drawings and paintings by a range of artists, creating an intimate environment for contemplation and to spend time with a collection of studies relating to themes explored within the exhibition.

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The final gallery is dedicated to a new solo installation by Lindsey Mendick, titled 'I Asked You Not to Hurt Me' (2025), drawing inspiration from Greek mythology and themes of mistreatment, exploitation and revenge. Through this powerful interplay of personal and mythological pain, Mendick creates a compelling commentary on the intersections of love, betrayal and the unseen cruelty that permeates both human relationships and our treatment of sentient beings. A wide variety of sea creatures lie frozen in their final state, their unsettling stillness evoking a sense of quiet decay. Upon closer inspection, the viewer can observe that their lifeless bodies are getting eaten by roaches, worms and flies, the flesh ripped apart from the inside out, illustrating nature's revenge for our senseless overconsumption. The work prompts us to reflect on the deeper implications of our actions and the narratives we choose to embrace.

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Gallery hours:
Tuesday – Wednesday
School and group visits only
Thursday – Sunday
12 – 4 pm

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Nengi Omuku
Nzogbu Nzogbu
2024
Oil on sanyan
130 x 120 cm / 51 ¼ x 47 ¼ in
Courtesy the artist and Pippy Houldsworth
Gallery, London
© Nengi Omuku
Photo: Todd-White Art Photography

Tai Shani
Haunted by a Million Small Suns II,
2023
Expanding foam, electrical cable, epoxy,
jesmonite, glass, lightbulb, resin
70 x 70 x 20 cm / 27.56 x 27.56 x 7.87 in
Photo: Toni Cuhadi
Courtesy of Gathering and the artist

Nour Jaouda
Silent Dust
2024
Dyed fabric, steel
250 x 300 cm / 98.43 x 118.11 in
Courtesy the artist and Union Pacific
© Nour Jaouda

Lindsey Mendick
It Was Just A Bit Of Fun
2024
Glazed ceramic
71 x 58 x 58 cm / 28 x 23 x 23 in
Courtesy the artist and Carl Freedman Gallery
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