

# GAGOSIAN

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Gagosian Announces *Situation Comedy*, an Exhibition of New Paintings by Derrick Adams, Opening in London on February 13

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Derrick Adams, *Only Happy Thoughts*, 2024, acrylic and fabric collage on wood panel, in artist's frame, 60 3/8 × 60 3/8 × 2 1/2 inches (153.4 × 153.4 × 6.4 cm) © Derrick Adams Studio

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**LONDON, January 8, 2025**—Gagosian is pleased to announce *Situation Comedy*, an exhibition of new paintings by Derrick Adams opening on February 13 at the Davies Street gallery.

Composed with brightly hued, faceted planes of acrylic paint and fabric collage, Adams's paintings present visions of Black Americana through figures engaged in everyday leisure and enlivened by individual daydreams and fantasies. The paintings convey seriocomic moments of conflict and resolution that draw from the narrative strategies of television sitcoms and movies, sharing a sense of humor and familiarity integral to the genre. They reflect the significance of pop culture and comedy in defining the joys and contradictions of contemporary life.

Each painting has elements of comedic storytelling, establishing situations starring imagined characters and humorous juxtapositions, before landing the punchline. *Good Egg, Bad Bunny* (2024) relays a nostalgic vision of Easter from a child's perspective, with an egg hunt and a life-size chocolate bunny that has been conspicuously nibbled. An older woman holding a palm leaf highlights the intersection of the holiday's communal and commercial aspects with ritualistic and religious meanings. *Baked In* (2024) centers on a man lying on a gingham-patterned placemat or picnic blanket at an ambiguous scale, his body overlaid by a pie in a humorous take on Leonardo da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*. He holds flags and fireworks that symbolize the celebration of Independence

Day in the United States, while flies and ants invade the scene. *Only Happy Thoughts* (2024) pictures a contented woman dreaming of a hairstyle composed of Tootsie Roll candies, embodying a sweetness that is both pure and excessive.

*Fantastic Voyage* (2024) is a nocturnal beach scene with a female genie seated inside an illuminated head inspired by the face vessels made by Black potters in the nineteenth-century South. Significant to the history of American ceramics, most of these stylized heads were produced by unrecorded artists and imbued with links to African art and ritual objects. *Sweetening the Pot* (2024) likewise features the enigmatic face vessels, here pictured as functional cups in a domestic interior and linked to Kool-Aid's anthropomorphic pitcher character. Combining the depiction of commercial products and the collage aesthetic of Pop art with unexpected historical references, the work playfully fuses cultural signifiers. A group of portrait paintings further explores these forms, merging the shapes of the faces in profile with those of the ceramic face vessels placed above them. Both comic and expressive, these doubled, abstracted portraits unite past with present and illustrate Adams's continued exploration of material culture as it relates to identity.

Set in a western landscape, *Getting the Bag* (2024) represents a masked man holding an eagle, which in turn clutches a handbag from Telfar, a sought-after brand designed by Telfar Clemens. In so doing, Adams combines the aesthetics of contemporary consumerism with that of America's national symbol. Writer Folasade Ologundudu further connects the painting to the myth of Ganymede in Homer's *Iliad* and its representation by artists from Rembrandt to Robert Rauschenberg, interpreting it as a multifaceted work that is rife with contradictions.

**Derrick Adams** was born in Baltimore in 1970, and lives and works in New York. Collections include the Baltimore Museum of Art; Birmingham Museum of Art, Alabama; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; Brooklyn Museum, New York; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Exhibitions include *ON*, Pioneer Works, New York (2016); *Network*, California African American Museum, Los Angeles (2017); *Patrick Kelly, The Journey*, Studio Museum in Harlem/Countee Cullen Library, New York (2017); *Sanctuary*, Museum of Arts and Design, New York (2018); *Transmission*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver (2018); *Where I'm From*, Baltimore City Hall (2019); *Buoyant*, Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, New York (2020); *Derrick Adams and Barbara Earl Thomas: Packaged Black*, Henry Art Gallery, Seattle (2021); *LOOKS*, Cleveland Museum of Art (2021–22); and *I Can Show You Better Than I Can Tell You*, FLAG Art Foundation, New York (2023). Adams has received the Louis Comfort Tiffany Award (2009), Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize from the Studio Museum in Harlem (2016), Gordon Parks Foundation Fellowship (2018), and Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Residency (2019).

#DerrickAdams

Extended through March 29, 2025

## **DERRICK ADAMS**

*Situation Comedy*

Opening reception: Thursday, February 13, 6–8pm

February 13–March 22, 2025

17–19 Davies Street, London

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