

Esther Schipper

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Pays rêvé, pays réel

A proposal by Lucien Terras — In dialogue with works from the Seroussi Collection

June 4 – August 1, 2026

Esther Schipper Paris | Galerie Natalie Seroussi

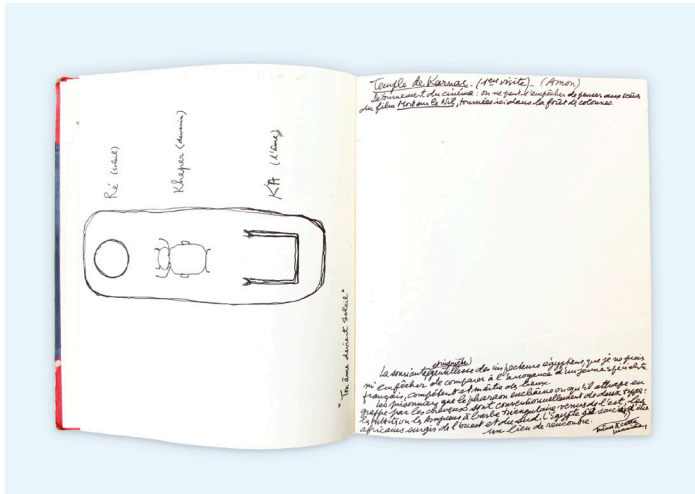


Image: Édouard Glissant, page from Édouard Glissant's manuscript, produced in 1988 during his trip to Egypt, Édouard Glissant, *Diary of a Journey on the Nile, 1988*. NAF 28894 (67) (NIL^o). Édouard Glissant Papers, Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF). Edition: Instituto Tomie Ohtake / Ana Roman and Paulo Miyada.

Held in two locations, at Esther Schipper Paris and Galerie Natalie Seroussi, the exhibition brings together works by Merikokeb Berhanu, Sanford Biggers, Julien Creuzet, Leslie Hewitt, Leslie Hewitt in collaboration with Jamal Cyrus, Jason Moran, Alex Gardner, Simone Leigh, Arjan Martins, Roberto Matta, Moké, and Thomias Radin.

Pays rêvé, pays réel takes its title from a 1985 poetry collection by Édouard Glissant (1928–2011) and draws inspiration from the Martinican writer, poet, and philosopher's long-lasting influence on contemporary artistic practices across the African diaspora. The exhibition features artists whose work engages with histories of migration, memory, language and belonging, contemplating the diasporic experience as lived reality and as imagined space. Rooted in the Caribbean but attentive to the interconnectedness of cultures and people, and tracing links between Africa, Europe and the Americas, Glissant's writing continues to serve as a framework for artists to think through identity beyond fixed origins or singular narratives. His ideas reverberate in works that navigate fractured histories, overlapping geographies and the poetic possibilities of transformation. Through painting, sculpture, sound, and video, **Pays rêvé, pays réel** considers how contemporary artists inherit and expand Glissant's legacy, creating new visual and conceptual languages for understanding the complexities of the African diaspora today.

On view at Esther Schipper Paris are works by Sanford Biggers, Julien Creuzet, Jamal Cyrus, Leslie Hewitt, Jason Moran, and Thomias Radin.

Upon entering the gallery, visitors are met by Thomias Radin's **Foss' a fanm**, 2026, whose extravagant dandelion-yellow frame envelops a square wooden panel, merging frame and painting into a singular gesture shaped by the artist's familial ties to carpentry. Seen from a sharp overhead angle, a female bust turns her gaze away as braided cornrows unfurl into a floral pattern beneath a halo-like frame. Rooted in embodied knowledge informed by his background in dance and his upbringing between Guadeloupe and France, Radin's multidisciplinary practice explores memory and movement.

Facing it, For Solo Piano, Alto Saxophone, or Tambourine (This Score May Be Realized in Any Imaginative Way...), 2022 — the first collaboration between Leslie Hewitt and Jamal Cyrus — unfolds as an

open score inspired by multiple recordings of Thelonious Monk's Evidence (1948). A reconfigured wooden tambourine and iridescent conch shell appear against a dark background as metadata and a looping soundtrack animate the composition. Drawing on jazz and experimental notation, the work foregrounds interpretation, improvisation, and continual reactivation.

In the main gallery space, Julien Creuzet's **Dent cariée du Crétacé... (croton vert à points jaunes)**, 2025, appears both fragile and animated. Branching elements extend like ribs, wings, or antennae, while a dense green-and-yellow form evokes both steel and the resilient croton plant referenced in the title. Creuzet's practice merges visual art and poetry through sculpture, film, installation, and text, at the intersection of Caribbean histories and European modernity.

Three works from Hewitt's **Rough Cuts** series, 2025, combine collage and monoprint through cutting, layering, and reframing found materials. A black-and-white checkered ground recalling archaeological scale bars structures the composition, while irregular cut-outs partially obscure a botanical image sourced from reproductions of plants native to New York State. **Rhombus or Humming Song (I-IV-V)**, 2025, part of Hewitt and Cyrus's ongoing collaboration, continues their exploration of sound and form. Made of white oak and bronze, the wall sculpture features a fabric-like surface punctuated by circular bronze elements resembling tambourine cymbals.

In one corner, Sanford Biggers reimagines an antique quilt as a sculptural object. **Untitled**, 2024, consists of stacked cube-like forms arranged in a pyramidal configuration projecting from the wall, transforming the quilt from flat textile to architectural form. Quilts, central to his practice since 2009, serve as layered carriers of cultural knowledge and historical resonance.

In the alcove, three works on paper — **Rivbea Studio**, 2022, **Hesitation Blues**, 2022, and **Measures on a mountain**, 2024 — present the visual practice of jazz pianist and composer Jason Moran. Placing Japanese Gampi paper directly on a piano keyboard, he records the movement and pressure of his hands as he plays, transferring pigment onto the surface. The resulting compositions capture the physical traces of touch and sound.

On the left side of the gallery, Radin's **Meta Ka**, 2026, opens onto a spherical, abstracted space suggestive of a higher dimension. Drawing on ancient Egyptian cosmology, Radin engages the concept of "KA" — the animating force of life — tracing its resonance from Egypt to West Africa and the Caribbean. Creuzet's **Nos diables rouges... (autel coquillage)**, 2025, takes the form of a vertical, altar-like sculpture evoking both body and ritual object. Made of wood, paint, plastic, copper, textiles, thread, and a crowning Tridacna shell, the work resonates with the Red Devil figure of Martinican carnival traditions and broader Afro-diasporic cultures. With **Giza**, 2022, Biggers transforms an antique quilt into a sculptural wall work oscillating between surface and object, linking African diasporic craft traditions with wider visual and cultural lineages.

The French-born, American gallerist Lucien Terras has lived in New York since 1992. From 1996 until 2012, he ran D'Amelio Terras Gallery, which he co-founded in the early days of the Chelsea art district, representing emerging to internationally known artists. He recently joined Esther Schipper as Senior Director at Large.

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ESTHER SCHIPPER SAS
16 PLACE VENDÔME
75001 PARIS
TEL : +33 1 42 33 17 67
PARIS@ESTHERSCHIPPER.COM
WWW.ESTHERSCHIPPER.COM

NATALIE SEROUSSI
34 RUE DE SEINE
75006 PARIS
TEL : +33 1 46 34 05 84
GALERIE@NATALIESEROUSSI.COM
WWW.NATALIESEROUSSI.COM