

For immediate release

CHRIS OFILI Paradise Lost

September 14 – October 21, 2017

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 14, 6-8 PM



*The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide:
They hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.*

— John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book XII

David Zwirner is pleased to present *Paradise Lost*, an exhibition of new work by Chris Ofili. This presentation touches on themes of lost innocence, alienation, and desire. On view at 533 West 19th Street in New York, this will be Ofili's third solo exhibition at the gallery.

Paradise Lost both returns to and expands upon ideas Ofili presented earlier this year in his solo exhibition *Weaving Magic* at the National Gallery, London, where he debuted his tapestry *The Caged Bird's Song*. Commissioned by the British Clothworkers' Company, the tapestry was made in collaboration with the internationally renowned Dovecot Tapestry Studio in Edinburgh. In *Paradise Lost*, Ofili poses "the question of the

sweetness of the song—is the sweeter song the song of the uncaged bird, or the song of the caged bird? And what that really is asking about liberation and constraint, and how that could potentially relate to being human."¹

In 2018, David Zwirner Books will publish an artist's publication related to the exhibition.

Chris Ofili (b. Manchester, England, 1968) has become known for his intricate, kaleidoscopic paintings and works on paper that deftly merge abstraction and figuration. His recent works—vibrant, symbolic, and frequently mysterious—draw upon the lush landscapes and local traditions of the island of Trinidad, where he has lived since 2005. Employing a diverse range of aesthetic and cultural sources, which have included, among others, Zimbabwean cave paintings, blaxploitation films, Italian soccer player Mario Balotelli, and modernist painting, Ofili's work investigates the intersection of passion, identity, and representation.

Earlier this year, Ofili created a site-specific artwork, incorporating a mural, for Marisol, the newly redesigned restaurant at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. The artist will also present new work commissioned by the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, for the opening of its new building later this year.

In 2015, a group of Ofili's paintings was included in *All The World's Futures*, the 56th International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale, curated by Okwui Enwezor. Ofili's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions worldwide, including *Chris Ofili: Night and Day*, the first major museum solo exhibition of the artist's work in the United States. The show was organized by the New Museum in New York, where it was first presented in 2014, and traveled to the Aspen Art Museum in Colorado in 2015.

Other monographic exhibitions have taken place at the British Pavilion, 50th Venice Biennale, Venice (2003); The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2005); Tate Britain, London (2005 and 2010); kestnergesellschaft, Hanover (2006); and the Arts Club of Chicago (2010). In 1998, he was awarded the prestigious Turner Prize and, in 2016, Ofili was a recipient of Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (CBE), awarded by the Queen.

His works are represented in prominent collections internationally, including the British Museum, London; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Tate Gallery, London; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

¹ Chris Ofili in *imagine ...*, "Chris Ofili - The Caged Bird's Song," BBC One, Winter 2017.

For all press inquiries, contact

Ashley Tickle at +1 212 727 2070 atickle@davidzwirner.com