

## and I will wear you in my heart of heart

Exhibition dates: May 1–August 13, 2021

The FLAG Art Foundation | 545 West 25<sup>th</sup> Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, NY

Derrick Adams	Anthony Cudahy	Jay Lynn Gomez	Sanya Kantarovsky	Joan Semmel
Gareth Cadwallader	John Currin	Jenna Gribbon	Arghavan Khosravi	Alessandro Teoldi
Jordan Casteel	Cynthia Daignault	Caleb Hahne	Danielle McKinney	Honor Titus
Will Cotton	TM Davy	Sally J. Han	GaHee Park	Salman Toor
Ann Craven	Peter Doig	Hilary Harkness	Nicolas Party	Anna Weyant
Somaya Critchlow	Carroll Dunham	Reggie Burrows Hodges	Cheryl Pope	Lisa Yuskavage
Njideka Akunyili Crosby	Louis Fratino	Ernst Yohji Jaeger	Tajh Rust	Billie Zangewa

The FLAG Art Foundation presents *and I will wear you in my heart of heart*, a group exhibition of contemporary paintings and textiles on view **May 1-August 13, 2021**, on its 9<sup>th</sup> floor. Centering on a gesture of care, the exhibition explores the myriad ways in which 35 artists evoke tenderness through depictions of lovers and friends, familial exchanges, moments of solitude, and even a cowboy and his pastel pink unicorn. *Heart of heart* includes recent and new works created for the exhibition that embody the cross-generational resurgence in figuration as a mode of exploring identity, cultural histories, and personal experience.

*Heart of heart* nods to a line from (and spoken by) *Hamlet*<sup>1</sup> and addresses that which we hold closest, be it a relationship, a feeling, one's own well-being, an object, or a dream. Illustratively, the "heart of heart" is akin to a castle's keep, an innermost stronghold and safeguard from the outside world. **Reggie Burrows Hodges** and **Jordan Casteel** depict large-scale scenes of shared intimacy between parents and children. **TM Davy** and **Jenna Gribbon** position viewers as voyeurs, granted fleeting access to an affectionate gesture between friends and/or lovers. Reflective moments are found in paintings by **Peter Doig** (a lone figure stands outside the wall of Lapeyrouse Cemetery in Port of Spain, Trinidad), **Danielle McKinney** (a woman sits in prayer sits under a crucifix and portrait of the Virgin Mary), and **Ernst Yohji Jaeger** (a spider web is suspended—or being spun—between the fingers of a young man). **Joan Semmel**'s frank depiction of her aging body and **Jay Lynn Gomez**'s painting of a polaroid picture of her younger self speak to vulnerability and transformation. Made of materials that typically dress and wrap the body, textiles by **Cheryl Pope** (needle-punched wool roving on cashmere), **Alessandro Teoldi** (reconstituted airline blankets), and **Billie Zangewa** (hand-stitched and collaged silk) connote touch, comfort, and connectivity—intrinsic elements of tenderness.

With the understanding that the concept of tenderness is both elastic and individual, the exhibition opens with three artworks: **Tajh Rust**'s *If I had a dream*, 2021; **Anthony Cudahy**'s *Us (with Jacob's Ladder, Apocalypse Tree, Lion)*, 2020; and **Lisa Yuskavage**'s *Mutualism*, 2006. Rust's jewel-toned canvas centers on two sleeping figures: a woman on an emerald couch and a man on a sapphire carpet studded with butterflies. While the figures' relationship is opaque—are the lovers, siblings, or just friends—their hands, which almost touch, create an unmistakable intimacy. Cudahy paints himself and his husband Ian in a life-size towering embrace; connected through a spiral of each other's hands, the couple is woven into a patchwork of symbols and imagery borrowed from the medieval *Bayeux* and *Apocalypse Tapestries*, as well as references to Helen Frankenthaler's explosive *Jacob's Ladder*, 1957<sup>2</sup>. By contrast, Yuskavage's small-scale oil painting features two nymph-like female figures piggybacking in a Candyland-like landscape—both are naked but for a single black Mary Jane shoe. Yuskavage's intertwined characters are sexual and sexualized, playful, and possibly parasitic. Partially obscured by branches and greenery, the intentions on their flushed-faces are impossible to discern.

<sup>1</sup> "[...]Give me that man / That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him / In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart, / As I do thee." (*Hamlet* 3.2.65-67); Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Ed. George Richard Hibbard. Oxford University Press, 2008. Google Books.

<sup>2</sup> The title of this work refers to the biblical character Jacob, the son of Isaac and Rebekah. As described in the *Book of Genesis*, Jacob had a dream in which he saw a ladder reaching toward heaven. Speaking about this work, Frankenthaler said, "The picture developed (bit by bit while I was working on it) into shapes symbolic of an exuberant figure and ladder, therefore *Jacob's Ladder*."

Continuing through two adjoining galleries, over 30 artworks of varied subject matters and formal affinities are installed to spark dialogues that are, by turns, funny, heartbreaking, erotic, nostalgic, empathetic, etc. Cumulatively, the works in *heart of heart* illustrate the simple beauty of everyday moments, intimacy, and connection.

**About:**

The FLAG Art Foundation, founded in 2008 by art patron Glenn Fuhrman, is a non-profit exhibition space that encourages the appreciation of contemporary art among a diverse audience. FLAG presents four to six exhibitions a year that include artworks by international, established and emerging artists, borrowed from a variety of sources. FLAG invites a broad range of creative individuals to curate exhibitions and works in-depth with artists to provide curatorial support and a platform to realize their own solo exhibitions. Based in Manhattan's Chelsea art district, FLAG and its related programs are free and open to the public.

Join the conversation online and follow FLAG's Instagram (@flagartfoundation) and Twitter (@FLAGartNYC) and use the #heartofheart hashtag when posting.