

# FELIX & SPEAR

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Press Release  
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## *EVOLUTION*

### Tam Joseph Paintings

**3 Oct – 1 Nov 2020**

Ealing, London W5, September 11, 2020 – Felix & Spear Gallery is delighted to present the exhibition *Evolution – Tam Joseph Paintings*. This is Tam Joseph's first solo exhibition in London for many years.

Tam Joseph's new exhibition, *Evolution*, sees the artist presenting a body of work that decisively reflects the astonishing directions his work has continued to take over the past decades. Though his work has always been varied in both its subject matter and form, it is perhaps his paintings with an explicit social content – such as *Spirit of the Carnival* – for which Tam Joseph has been particularly celebrated and recognised. *Evolution* demonstrates an ever-increasing maturity on the part of the artist and this selection of work is delightfully original and decidedly unexpected in its form and content.

With its multiple references to art history, popular culture, the continued relevance and influence of US music, and manifestations of diaspora, identity, and history, *Evolution* represents an important opportunity for audiences to familiarise or re-familiarise themselves with the work of Joseph. One of the centrepieces of the exhibition is sure to be Joseph's remarkable sampling of, and homage to, Frans Hals' celebrated and much-loved 17th century Baroque masterpiece, *The Laughing Cavalier*. It is a measure of the wit, imagination, and creativity of Joseph that he so successfully reinterprets a painting from four centuries ago, with his *Laughing Legend with Stratocaster*. The reincarnation of *The Laughing Cavalier* as Jimi Hendrix, his flamboyant clothing, self-assured, but decidedly sensitive bearing depicted with a singular painterly sophistication by Joseph. Another one of his paintings, *King of Kings* sees Joseph paying homage to another one of his musical heroes, Nat 'King' Cole, with so much of his portrait steeped in new ways of seeing the great American singer.



*Laughing Legend with Stratocaster*

*Evolution* bears witness to Joseph's remarkable and characteristic ability to derive his ideas, interests, and artistic style from a broad and diverse range of sources. More than anything, as the exhibition title itself suggests, here is an artist whose practices are forever evolving.

## **About Tam Joseph**

Tam Joseph (b. 1947) is a Dominica-born British painter. Joseph came to London at the age of eight, where he still lives and works. In 1967 he studied at the Central School of Art and Design, following this with a BA at the Slade School of Art which he left after a few months. Joseph worked on *Yellow Submarine*, the 1968 animated film featuring the Beatles. He travelled in Europe and Asia during the 1970s, and subsequently enrolled at the London College of Printing, graduating with a Dip AD in Typographic design. While working for the magazine *Africa Journal* in the late 1970s and early 1980s, he travelled extensively in Africa. In 1979 Joseph illustrated Buchi Emecheta's children's book *Titch the Cat*, published by Allison and Busby.

The eclectic spirit of the Bohemian has played a definitive role in Joseph's multifaceted exploration of contemporary realities, exploring the many inspirations, aspirations, and contradictions that shape those realities. Joseph's work is often figurative, personal, ephemeral, and idiosyncratic, with a surrealistic take on life as he sees it.

One of Joseph's best known paintings is his 1983 work *Spirit of the Carnival*, a reference to the Notting Hill Carnival. Another notable work, dating from 1983, is *UK School Report*, which depicts the passage of a Black youth through the British education system in three portraits that are captioned: "Good at sports", "Likes music" and "Needs surveillance".

Joseph's work has been the subject of and included in numerous exhibitions in the UK and Internationally.

The works of Tam Joseph are in private and public collections including: The Arts Council; Victoria & Albert Museum; The Museum of London; Wolverhampton Art Gallery; Kelvingrove Gallery; Ben Uri Gallery; Contemporary Art Society; Sheffield City Art Gallery; Camden Libraries; Bradford City Museum; Newlyn Orion.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

Gallery address: **Felix & Spear, 71 St. Mary's Road, London W5 5RG**

Exhibition Opening Hours: Wednesday – Friday 11.00 – 18.00, Saturday & Sunday 12.00 – 15.00

If you would like more information about this topic, please contact 020 8566 1574 / [press@felixandspear.com](mailto:press@felixandspear.com)

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