

FELIX & SPEAR

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Press Release
September 11, 2023

TAM JOSEPH

'Beam Me Up, Sweet Lord'

23 Sep – 29 Oct 2023

Meet the artist: Sat 7th Oct, 12-3pm

London, September 11, 2023 – Felix & Spear are pleased to present *'Beam Me Up, Sweet Lord'*, an exhibition of paintings and sculptures by Tam Joseph, spanning a period of almost 40 years, from the mid-1980s to the present.

"The earliest work in this exhibition is a sculpture titled 'The Struggle' carved in 1986 and the latest is the painting 'The Roly-poly Rain Cloud' made in 2022. This exhibition represents my range of interests from paintings to sculpture. The portrait of 'Len Johnson' (b. 1902), a British Boxer of African Irish heritage, who was very badly treated by the British Boxing Board of Control, is the only work done under commission by The Guardian newspaper among the dozen or so works in this exhibition. I mention this work as I was appalled and angered by Len Johnson's story and could read the sadness in his eyes, even from images of poor resolution which I found online. The works also span countries; 'Beam Me Up, Sweet Lord', 'I May Wear a Mask but I'm No Outlaw', the title of which comes from the 'Lone Ranger', 1960's TV Western series, were conceived in the United Kingdom, whereas 'Mon Petit Micoux', 'Ring' and 'Eye' were conceived in Nimes, France, using papier mâché. The painting 'John Wayne' was inspired by the first movie I ever saw at the Carib Cinema in Dominica in 1953."

Tam Joseph, Sep 2023

About Tam Joseph

b.1947 Roseau, Dominica

Lives and works in London, England

Dominica-born British painter, sculptor and graphic designer Tam Joseph emigrated from the Caribbean to London in 1955 at the age of eight. He studied at the Central School of Art and Design London (1967), followed by a short period at the Slade School of Fine Art before leaving to travel in Europe and the Far East. Joseph subsequently graduated in Typographic Design from the London College of Printing. While working for the magazine Africa Journal in the late 1970s and early 1980s, he travelled extensively in Africa, commenting: 'I have never felt any

tangible difference between me and the peoples of Africa south of the Sahara.’ In the 1970s, Joseph worked with the Keskidee Centre Collective North London, a hub for African and Afro-Caribbean politics and arts. Joseph’s practice often combines humour with serious political narratives to challenge contemporary realities and their inherent contradictions. Awareness, diaspora, identity, and World history remain recurrent themes. Selected exhibitions include Caribbean Art at the Crossroads, El Museo del Barrio, Studio Museum in Harlem and Queens Museum (2012), No Colour Bar: Black British Art in Action 1960-1990, Guildhall Art Gallery, London (2015-16), and Life Between Islands, Tate Britain (2021-22) and Art Gallery of Ontario (2023-24). Tam Joseph’s work is represented in many public collections including the Arts Council Collection, Tate and V&A.

The book ‘Tam Joseph – I Know What I See’ provides an extensive survey of the artist’s work, published by Four Corners Books in 2023 and available from their website.

NOTES TO EDITORS

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

Exhibition Opening Hours: Wed – Fri 11.00 – 18.00, Sat - Sun 12.00 – 15.00

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