

## The Market Momentum Of Contemporary Artist Derrick Adams

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Derrick Adams, *Floater 93*, 2020, acrylic paint and fabric on paper, 50 x 100 in. diptych (50 x 50 in. each) PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND RHONA HOFFMAN GALLERY

Derrick Adams is a Brooklyn-based multidisciplinary artist whose work explores the complexities of Black identity, culture and experience. Drawing inspiration from everyday life, pop culture, and art history, Adams delves into themes of self-empowerment, leisure and community, while challenging stereotypical narratives. His bold, colorful compositions often incorporate geometric patterns, collage elements and layered textures, reflecting his fascination with how individual and collective identities are constructed. Notable series such as “Floater”, celebrating moments of Black joy and relaxation, and the exhibition “Sanctuary” on the plight of working-class Black people before and during the Civil Rights Movement, inspired by The Green Book’s safe travel destinations for Black American travelers during segregation, highlight Adams’ ability to weave powerful stories with nuanced social commentary. Through his art, he reclaims and reimagines spaces of belonging and celebration for Black communities.

Adams’ work is currently exhibited alongside creations by Ai Weiwei, Marcel Duchamp, David Hammons, Jasper Johns, KAWS, Jeff Koons, Yayoi Kusama, Roy Lichtenstein, Claes Oldenburg, Meret Oppenheim, Robert Rauschenberg, Martial Raysse, James Rosenquist, Do Ho Suh,

Mickalene Thomas and Andy Warhol in the exhibition “Pop Forever, Tom Wesselmann &...”, on view through February 24, 2025 at the Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris. At the heart of the show celebrating Pop Art – one of the most influential artistic movements of the 1960s – is Tom Wesselmann (1931-2004), a trailblazing icon of Pop Art, showcased through an extraordinary collection of 150 vibrant paintings and mixed-media works. Featuring 70 remarkable creations by 35 artists from diverse generations and nationalities, all connected by their shared passion for the Pop aesthetic, this journey through Pop Art stretches from the 1920s to today, spanning from its playful Dadaist origins to its dynamic contemporary interpretations, to offer visitors an unmissable exploration of its enduring legacy. Nicole Schloss, Senior Specialist of Contemporary at Sotheby’s New York, discusses Adams’ art market.



Derrick Adams, Floater 48 (Unicorn), 2017, acrylic, pencil and fabric on paper, 50 by 50 in., sold for \$81,250 at Sotheby’s New York Contemporary Art Day Auction in May 2018 to benefit the Studio Museum in Harlem | PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND RHONA HOFFMAN GALLERY

**When did you first discover Derrick Adams' works and what are their appeal?**

I first discovered Adams' work in a featured solo booth presentation at Art Basel Miami Beach in 2016 with Rhona Hoffman. I was blown away by the immediacy of his imagery, using neon pool floats, dazzlingly colored bathing suits and other fun, very contemporary accessories to differentiate each person and their personality. There was a relation between each figure, their float and their position on the float. These were such celebratory images of summer and celebratory images of Blackness, and the conceptual undertones of leisure – who gets to have it, what does it look like and how can it be enjoyed – are similarly immediate.

**What are your thoughts on the art market for Derrick Adams and how it has evolved over the past few years?**

In 2018, as part of our benefit auction for the Studio Museum in Harlem, Sotheby's offered an Adams "Floater" work, which sold for \$81,250 – four times its \$20,000 low estimate. The extremely strong auction debut for Adams signaled a growing secondary market for his work and was further an indication of a burgeoning primary market. His works have only become scarcer ever since. For the opening of Salon 94's sprawling new headquarters, Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn chose to feature Adams' latest monumental canvases of strikingly colorful portraits for the inaugural exhibition. The paintings were statement-making, as was their presence at the gallery. Adams' work is mature and thought-provoking, and part of a crucial group of artists such as Mickalene Thomas and Kehinde Wiley who are bringing the Black experience to the forefront of their work, as well as to the broader artistic canon.

**Who are Derrick Adams' collectors?**

His collector base spans all ages. The artist's economy of line and color blocking appeal to the generation of newer, younger collectors. However, a number of established collectors have become taken with his imagery for the same reasons.