

Gagosian Presents New Paintings by Derrick Adams

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Derrick Adams, *Only Happy Thoughts*, 2024 | Acrylic and fabric collage on wood panel, in artist's frame | Courtesy the artist and Gagosian

Gagosian to present *Situation Comedy*, an exhibition of new paintings by Derrick Adams opening at the Davies Street gallery.

Composed with brightly hued, faceted planes of acrylic paint and fabric collage, Adams's paintings present visions of Black Americana through figures engaged in everyday leisure and enlivened by individual daydreams and fantasies. The paintings convey seriocomic moments of conflict and resolution that draw from the narrative strategies of television sitcoms and movies, sharing a sense of humor and familiarity integral to the genre. They reflect the significance of pop culture and comedy in defining the joys and contradictions of contemporary life.



Derrick Adams, *Fantastic Voyage*, 2024 | Acrylic and fabric collage on wood panel, in artist's frame | Courtesy the artist and Gagosian

Each painting has elements of comedic storytelling, establishing situations starring imagined characters and humorous juxtapositions, before landing the punchline. *Good Egg, Bad Bunny* (2024) relays a nostalgic vision of Easter from a child's perspective, with an egg hunt and a life-size chocolate bunny that has been conspicuously nibbled. An older woman holding a palm leaf highlights the intersection of the holiday's communal and commercial aspects with ritualistic and religious meanings. *Baked In* (2024) centers on a man lying on a gingham-patterned placemat or picnic blanket at an ambiguous scale, his body overlaid by a pie in a humorous take on Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man. He holds flags and fireworks that symbolize the celebration of Independence Day in the United States, while flies and ants invade the scene. *Only Happy Thoughts* (2024) pictures a contented woman dreaming of a hairstyle composed of Tootsie Roll candies, embodying a sweetness that is both pure and excessive.

Fantastic Voyage (2024) is a nocturnal beach scene with a female genie seated inside an illuminated head inspired by the face vessels made by Black potters in the nineteenth-century South. Significant to the history of American ceramics, most of these stylized heads were produced by unrecorded artists and imbued with links to African art and ritual objects. *Sweetening the Pot* (2024) likewise features the enigmatic face vessels, here pictured as functional cups in a domestic interior and linked to Kool-Aid's anthropomorphic pitcher character. Combining the depiction of commercial products and the collage aesthetic of Pop art with unexpected historical references, the painting playfully fuses cultural signifiers.



Derrick Adams, *Sweetening the Pot*, 2024 | Acrylic and fabric collage on wood panel, in artist's frame | Courtesy the artist and Gagosian

Set in a western landscape, *Getting the Bag* (2024) represents a masked man holding an eagle, which in turn clutches a handbag from Telfar, a sought-after brand designed by Telfar Clemens. In so doing, Adams combines the aesthetics of contemporary consumerism with that of America's national symbol. Writer Folasade Ologundudu further connects the painting to the myth of Ganymede in Homer's Iliad and its representation by artists from Rembrandt to Robert Rauschenberg, interpreting it as a multifaceted work that is rife with contradictions.