



CLAIRE OLIVER GALLERY ANNOUNCES  
*WE SPEAK IN RIVERS*  
A SOLO EXHIBITION FEATURING 15 NEW WORKS BY ARTIST STAN SQUIREWELL

NOVEMBER 10, 2023 - JANUARY 13, 2024  
Champagne Vernissage Friday, November 10th 6 - 8 pm



**NEW YORK, October 17, 2023** | Claire Oliver Gallery proudly announces *We Speak In Rivers*, a solo exhibition created by artist Stan Squirewell featuring 15 large-scale multi-media artworks. With a focus on chronicling histories often overlooked, Squirewell uses documentary photographs from the 1900s that feature Black and mixed race people as a starting point to create richly layered identities and fleshed out characters, honoring and lifting up the anonymous original figures.

“I see my work as reaching back through history, creating a visual conversation with the often forgotten subjects of so many old photographs,” states Squirewell. “So much of what we know about history is told through a one dimensional lens – I aim to give my characters depth, spirituality, and a new kind of legacy – one that was often denied them in their own time.”

Squirewell’s work is characterized by a signature blending of media and techniques that the artist likens to a DJ’s remix, resulting in layered and multivalent artworks that defy easy categorization. The

artist takes his own photographs of fabrics and adornments and collages them onto the anonymous subjects to create fresh looks with status branding.

Squirewell's work is grounded in the concept of reasserting identities, often fictitious, as a salve to the denial of complex human identity that was often perpetrated on Black people and people of color throughout history. Beginning with a transcription of a poem by Langston Hughes or a statement relevant to the work itself, and composed of glyphs from a long dead African language, the artist carves unique frames for each image. He considers this a part of the story and a sort of reliquary for the work. Squirewell uses the Shou Sugi carving technique of fire-blackening wood, which both preserves it and memorializes the texts. Squirewell's own family lineage was obfuscated until he discovered in his 20s that his heritage included Indigenous roots. This experience profoundly shaped how he perceives identity and how history is passed down imperfectly. It continues to inspire his artistic dialogue with the past.

The works will be on view in Harlem through January 13, 2024.

#### **IMAGE CAPTIONS**

Stan Squirewell, *Easter Monday Mum's and Dandelions*, 2022, Mixed media collage, paint, and hand carved Shou Sugi

Stan Squirewell, *Bebop's*, 2022, Mixed media collage, paint, and hand carved Shou Sugi

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#### **ABOUT STAN SQUIREWELL**

Stan Squirewell (b. 1978) is a painter, photographer, installation, and performance artist. His work has been exhibited worldwide and is part of the permanent collections of The Minneapolis Institute of Art, The Museum of Fine Art, Boston, The Frederick R. Weisman Art Museum, National Museum for African American History and Culture, A Smithsonian Museum, Washington DC amongst others.

Born and raised in Washington, DC in the Barry Farm neighborhood, just a few blocks away from The Nicholson Project, Squirewell established a serious art practice while working from his Harlem-based studio before moving to Louisville, KY where he currently lives and works. Squirewell's artistic training began at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts. He holds an MFA from Maryland Institute College of Art's Hoffberger School of Painting (2007). He has performed with Nick Cave (SoundSuits) at the National Portrait Gallery, and Jefferson Pinder with G-Fine Arts.

## **ABOUT CLAIRE OLIVER GALLERY**

Claire Oliver Gallery is located in Central Harlem in a four-story brownstone. For nearly 25 years, Claire Oliver Gallery has showcased and celebrated artwork, with a focus on work by women and people of color, which transcends and challenges the traditional art historical canon. Our forward-thinking program and exclusive commitment to the primary market allows for an intensive focus that has nurtured and grown the careers of our artists. Many of the gallery's artists have been included in The Venice Biennale, The Whitney Biennial, and biennales in Sydney, Pittsburgh, and Lyon and have exhibited works in major international museums including the Smithsonian American Art Museum, The Art Institute of Chicago, Centre Georges Pompidou, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, and The Los Angeles County Museum of Art amongst others. Claire Oliver Gallery artists are included in the permanent collections of many important museums worldwide including The Smithsonian American Art Museum, The Art Institute of Chicago, The Tate Britain, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The State Hermitage Museum, MoMA, and the Museum of Arts and Design amongst many others. Claire Oliver Gallery held the first American exhibition for the Russian collaborative AES+F, whose work went on to twice represent Russia in the Russian pavilion of the Venice Biennale. Gallery artists have received prestigious fellowships including Fulbright, Guggenheim, USArtist and National Endowment for the Arts.

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