



CLAIRE OLIVER GALLERY PRESENTS *THREADS* AT EXPO CHICAGO 2024  
AN EXHIBITION OF NEW WORK BY ARTISTS GIO SWABY AND BK ADAMS

On view at booth #356  
April 8 – 14, 2024



New York, NY | March 2024 – [Claire Oliver Gallery](#) is pleased to return to EXPO CHICAGO for the ninth year in a row, presenting an exhibition of new works by artists Gio Swaby and BK Adams. On view at booth #356 from April 8 – 14, *Threads* features more than 15 new works including Swaby's signature textile portraits and Adams' mixed media lion portraits, created specifically for this exhibition. *Threads* marks Swaby's return to Chicago following her blockbuster solo exhibition *Fresh Up*, which was on view at The Art Institute of Chicago in April-July, 2023. For EXPO 2024, Swaby created a new body of works that speak directly to self-confidence, collaboration, and community. In tandem, artist BK Adams presents a series of new paintings that induce self-empowerment and assertiveness.

"We are thrilled to showcase such a powerful and positive exhibition at EXPO CHICAGO this year," states Claire Oliver. "This exhibition holds a great deal of symbolism as 'threads' represent what makes today's society so complex yet so fragile at the same time. The metaphor of this interconnectedness that binds

us all together is the starting point for *Threads*. Both artists share a deep understanding of this, specifically how liberating it can be to bring everyone together and how devastating it can be to be pulled apart. BK and Gio create their own unique narratives around this concept in a beautiful and moving way.”

Gio Swaby’s work showcases a woman using physical threads to represent the connection she has to the love and empathy she has for her family, as well as her culture and womanhood. Reclaiming power and representing those who want to feel comfortable in the spaces they occupy, the metaphorical threads in Swaby’s work tie her community to the center of society’s web. These threads tell stories that the world has yet to hear and thin out the thick fabric of humanity’s tapestry.

BK Adams’ work attaches to his identification of being a provider and father. In each piece, he metaphorically sews himself to his family through generations, rewriting past stories and teachings to his children about the power of choosing joy in every moment. He highlights animals in his work as a representation of the natural wisdom that humans have lost as a society and features threads as a symbol of tying deep into our collective purpose, pulling tight on the act of accepting what truly matters.

#### **IMAGE CAPTIONS**

Gio Swaby, *Together We Bloom IV* (panels from 9-panel grid work in process), 2024, cotton fabric and thread sewn on muslin, 64. 52 in.

Image courtesy of Claire Oliver Gallery

BK Adams, *Protect The Youth*, acrylic paint and mixed media on canvas, 2024, 48 x 72 x 3 in.

Image courtesy of Claire Oliver Gallery

#### **DEPARTMENT PR**

Sarah Brown McLeod

[sarah@department-pr.com](mailto:sarah@department-pr.com)

Roberta Zertuche

[roberta@department-pr.com](mailto:roberta@department-pr.com)

#### **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. The gallery’s 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.

[2288 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard](#)

New York, NY 10030

[www.claireoliver.com](http://www.claireoliver.com)

#### **ABOUT GIO SWABY**

Gio Swaby is a Bahamian interdisciplinary visual artist currently represented by Claire Oliver Gallery. She is known for her textile portraits that explore and celebrate Blackness.

With a multimedia practice that encompasses textile, installation, collage, performance and video, Swaby has exhibited in several galleries and museums including Claire Gallery in New York City, Die Textile in Schmallenberg Germany and The National Art Gallery of The Bahamas.

Swaby holds an Associate of Arts degree in Fine Art from The University of The Bahamas, a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Film, Video and Integrated Media from Emily Carr University of Art + Design and a Masters of Fine Arts in Interdisciplinary, Art, Media and Design from Ontario College of Art and Design University.

She currently lives and works in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

#### **ABOUT BK ADAMS**

BK Adams is a self-taught, American visual artist and sculptor based in Washington, DC. He is best known for his bold-colored, large-scale works that span across paintings, photographs, and sculptures. His work centers on materiality, synthesizing quotidian materials such as flowers, bicycles and chairs into unique artworks with layered storytelling.

Adams held his first solo gallery show entitled, *I Am Art* at his art studio in Washington, D.C. The early days of his career focused on monumental sculptures for alternative art spaces. Today, nearly all of Adams' work implores a visual movement of avant-garde expressionist abstract. He achieves this through the use of mixed media and everyday objects including textiles, metalworks, fiberglass, and traditional canvas – as well as photorealistic monochromes. His colorful, expressive workmanship reflects a life's journey with a specialty collection that embodies Washington D.C.'s rich history and culture. Adams was mentored by color field painter Sam Gilliam, who was a close friend and encouraged him to develop his work.

Adams' work has been showcased in the Honfleur Gallery, the Smithsonian Institution collection of Museums, the American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center, and more. His brightly-colored *Blue Horse* sculpture, which was created using foil and acrylic paint, is a permanent exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC).