

DIEDRICK BRACKENS AT OAKVILLE GALLERIES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21 January 2021

Oakville Galleries is currently closed in accordance with local government restrictions. We look forward to welcoming you back to the Galleries when we reopen. Please visit www.oakvillegalleries.com or follow our social media channels for updates on our reopening hours. Thank you so much for your continued support. Until then, Oakville Galleries is pleased to offer private virtual viewings to press. Please contact virtual@oakvillegalleries.com to schedule a viewing tour.

Diedrick Brackens: shape of a fever believer

on view through 10 April, 2021

Oakville Galleries at Centennial Square

Oakville Galleries is delighted to present *shape of a fever believer*, the first solo exhibition in Canada of the work of Los Angeles-based artist Diedrick Brackens. Known for his hand-dyed, hand-woven tapestries, Brackens combines figurative and abstract iconography to allude to larger cultural, political, and allegorical narratives. Within his intricate, large-scale work, he coaxes emotive, meditative reflections on dark, fractured histories and interweaves sensations of tenderness, trauma, healing, and legacy against a backdrop of American life.

Taking place at Oakville Galleries at Centennial Square, Brackens' exhibition brings together a selection of his recent textile work. In this new body of work, the artist centres on the metaphoric and lived experience of fatality associated with disease and sickness, namely HIV/AIDS and its disproportionate effect on Black, queer, and other marginalized communities. A series of silhouetted black figures against abstracted landscapes of colour participate in rituals and fantasies of desire and kinship. His repeated use of bare silhouettes, along with allegorical symbols—mosquitoes, veins, fire—lend to the creation of a collective mythology.

As told through the body language of each depicted figure, Brackens' stories are rooted as readily in vulnerability and care—the beauty and joy they can provide—as in danger, brutality, and intergenerational trauma. Brackens tenderly and compassionately engages in a resignification of disease, seeking to liberate infection from its malignant pathologies and to realize intimacy, freedom, and vigour for his subjects. With each scene, he engages with the affects of the Black experience in the United States, past and present.

Equally important as the iconography is the cultural significance of his process-based approach. Brackens connects a broad spectrum of references: American literature and folklore; textile traditions spanning West Africa, Europe, and Americas; and the artist's own cultural and religious upbringing in the Southern United States. Working with materials like cotton—materials that connect to the legacies of Brackens' ancestry and the residual traumas of the Transatlantic slave trade—and often alternative dyes like tea, wine, and bleach, he engages in the possibilities and stories bestowed by textile traditions.

ABOUT DIEDRICK BRACKENS

Diedrick Brackens (b. 1989, Mexia, TX, lives and works in Los Angeles, CA) received a BFA from the University of North Texas (Denton), and an MFA in textiles from California College of the Arts (Oakland). His work has been shown in solo exhibitions at Jack Shainman Gallery, New Museum (New York); Various Small Fires (Los Angeles); Ulrich Museum of Art (Wichita); and Johansson Projects (Oakland). Notable group exhibitions include Hammer Museum, California African American Museum (Los Angeles); Jewish Contemporary Art Museum (San Francisco); Dimensions Variable (Miami); and Thomas Erben Gallery (New York). His work is in the permanent collections of institutions including the Whitney Museum of American Art, Brooklyn Museum (New York); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art (Los Angeles); Museum of Fine Art (Houston), and more.

ABOUT OAKVILLE GALLERIES

Oakville Galleries is a not-for-profit contemporary art museum. Housed in two spaces—one alongside a public library in downtown Oakville, and another in a lakeside mansion and park—Oakville Galleries is one of Canada's leading art museums, driven by a belief in the singular power of art and artists to deepen our understanding of ourselves and our communities and move us toward a better world.

Oakville Galleries is located on Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the traditional territory of the Huron-Wendat and the Haudenosaunee. As an institution, Oakville Galleries recognizes the importance of establishing and maintaining meaningful and respectful relationships with the original inhabitants and keepers of the land, and we are grateful for the opportunity to operate on this territory.

Oakville Galleries in Gairloch Gardens

1306 Lakeshore Road East, Oakville
Tuesday: 1:00 pm–7:00 pm
Friday and Saturday: 10:00 am–5:00 pm

Oakville Galleries at Centennial Square

120 Navy Street, Oakville
Tuesday: 1:00 pm–7:00 pm
Friday and Saturday: 10:00 am–5:00 pm

Admission is free.

For more information about Oakville Galleries, our exhibitions or programs, visit www.oakvillegalleries.com or call 905.844.4402.

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Oakville Galleries gratefully acknowledges the ongoing support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, an agency of the Government of Ontario and the Corporation of the Town of Oakville, along with our many individual, corporate and foundation partners.

Images available on request.

For more information, please contact:

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