

Tanya Leighton

FRIEZE LONDON
13 – 17 October 2021

‘Unworlding’
Curated by Cédric Fauq
Booth U06

Esteban Jefferson

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For Frieze London, Tanya Leighton is delighted to present 'Petit Palais' by New-York based artist Esteban Jefferson as part of 'Unworlding', a new section of the fair curated by Cédric Fauq.

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Esteban Jefferson is a painter exploring race, identity and the legacies of colonialism. His work frequently reflects on how value is assigned to objects by interrogating institutional narratives and display. Jefferson's acclaimed project 'Petit Palais' at Frieze London will be the first presentation in the UK, following exhibitions at White Columns, New York (2019), Tanya Leighton, Berlin (2020), and Tanya Leighton, Los Angeles (2021).

As with previous iterations, this presentation comprises: a group of large-scale paintings, a two-channel video, a sound installation, a letter the artist wrote to the Petit Palais, and a faux-marble floor, reconsidering the ornate Beaux Art-style rotunda of the Museum in Paris. Jefferson's 'Petit Palais' is centred on two sculptural busts of unidentified African subjects situated in the museum's lobby. Jefferson's intention is to shed light on the position these busts occupy in the museum at the site of commerce and administration and to draw attention to the apparent lack of care or curatorial attention given to these sculptures in contrast to other works in the museum. In a recent Art in America article about the project, Precious Adesina explains: "While most of the other artworks on display at the museum were accompanied by extensively researched wall texts, these sculptures, carved from polychrome marble, had no attribution and were simply labelled 'Buste d'Africain'".

In Jefferson's paintings these sculptures are rendered in a hyperrealist style amid washed out sepia-toned scenes and sketchy ticket-counter exchanges. In contrast to their display and contextualisation within the museum, the busts are brought into sharp focus, making them visible, giving them prominence. Their details and attributes in other words have been attended to. Adeze Wilford describes the museum "as a space for knowledge and protection and keeping of objects, but the hierarchy of information and care shown through this series troubles the notion of these spaces and what is considered worthy of our consideration."

Accompanying the paintings is a two-channel video of the wall label captured by the artist with his smartphone. Mostly out of focus and on repetitive loop, the label's incompleteness is what we are reminded of. In dialogue with the silent video, a decorative iron floor grate sits atop a simple cube pedestal. Emitting an ambient soundscape of recordings taken from the lobby of the Petit Palais such as metal detectors beeping, pedestrians speaking in French, or the sound of high heels walking on the marble floor, this work highlights the liminal location of these busts within the museum itself.

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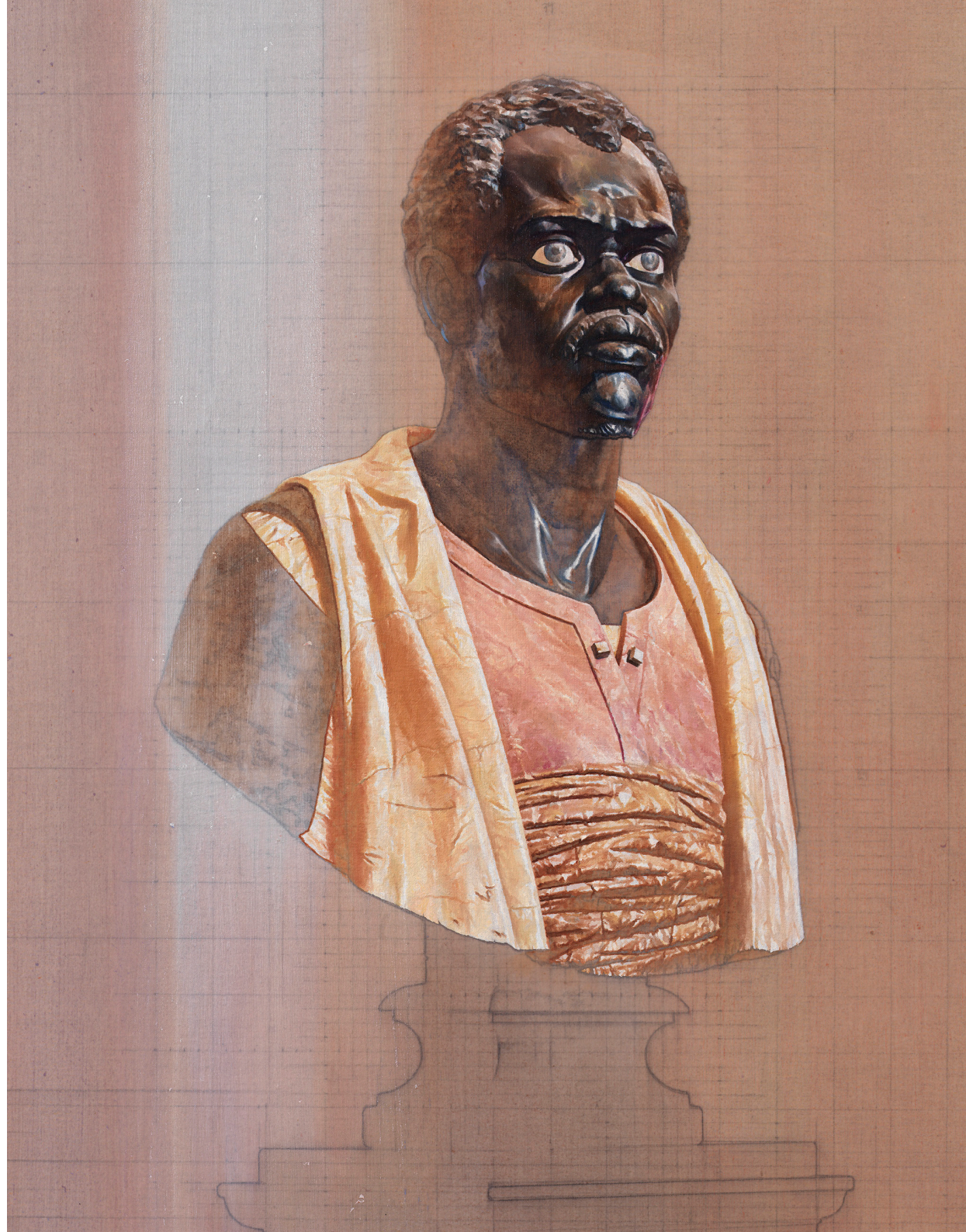
ESTEBAN JEFFERSON

Esteban Jefferson (born in 1989 in New York) lives and works in New York. He received his Masters in Visual Art in 2019 and his Bachelor of Arts in 2011, both from Columbia University, New York.

His work debuted in White Columns, New York in 2019, followed by his first solo exhibition in Europe at Tanya Leighton, Berlin in 2020 and his most recent exhibition, 'Petit Palais (Drawings)' at Tanya Leighton Los Angeles in 2021. Jefferson has been included in numerous group shows, most recently in the Museo del Barrio Triennale 'Estamos Bien', 'Open Call' at The Shed, 'New Old Histories' at Kasmin Gallery in 2021; and 'Vernacular Interior' at Hales Gallery, New York in 2019. He was selected to present a commissioned work as part of New York Public Art Fund's 'Art on the Grid' initiative on bus stops across the city in 2020.

Jefferson's works are in the collections of the Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College, Pérez Art Museum, Miami and ICA Miami.

Esteban Jefferson
Billetterie, 2021
Detail



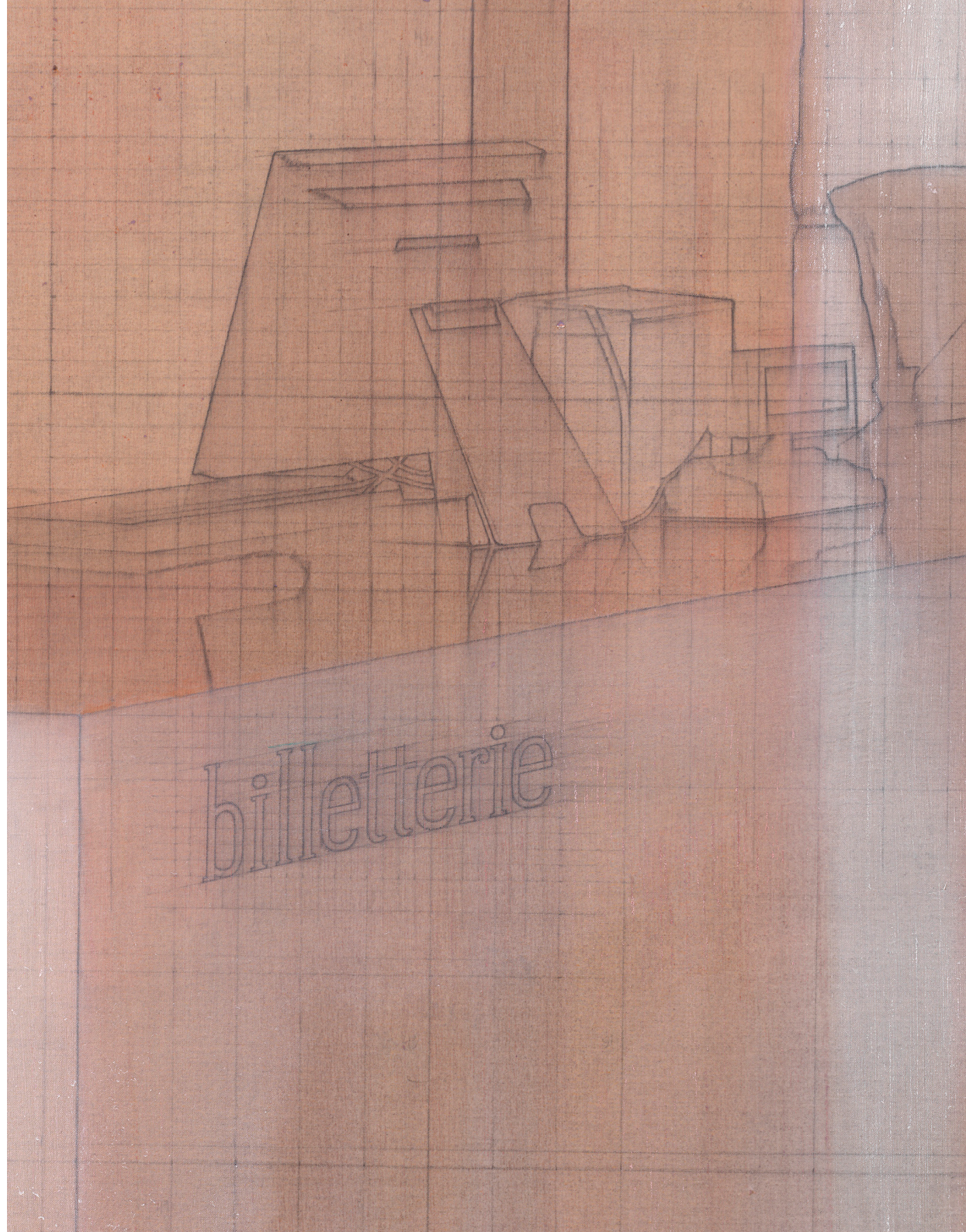


Esteban Jefferson
Billetterie, 2021
Oil on linen
182.9x274.3 cm
72x108 in
Unique
(JEFFERSON-2021-0034)



Esteban Jefferson
Billetterie, 2021
Detail

Esteban Jefferson
Billetterie, 2021
Detail



Esteban Jefferson
Billetterie, 2021
Detail





Esteban Jefferson
Label Qualiparis, 2021
Oil on linen
182.9x274.3 cm
72x108 in
Unique
(JEFFERSON-2021-0035)



Esteban Jefferson
Label Qualiparis, 2021
Detail

“(…) in the form of ghostly penciled outlines on brown-stained linen, the only element fully and attentively painted being a marble bust, positioned behind the counter, of an African woman. Reanimated, she gazes searchingly past us while, in turn, virtually everyone ignores her. Jefferson obviously did not.”

– Martin Herbert
Artforum, 2020

Esteban Jefferson
Label Qualiparis, 2021
Detail

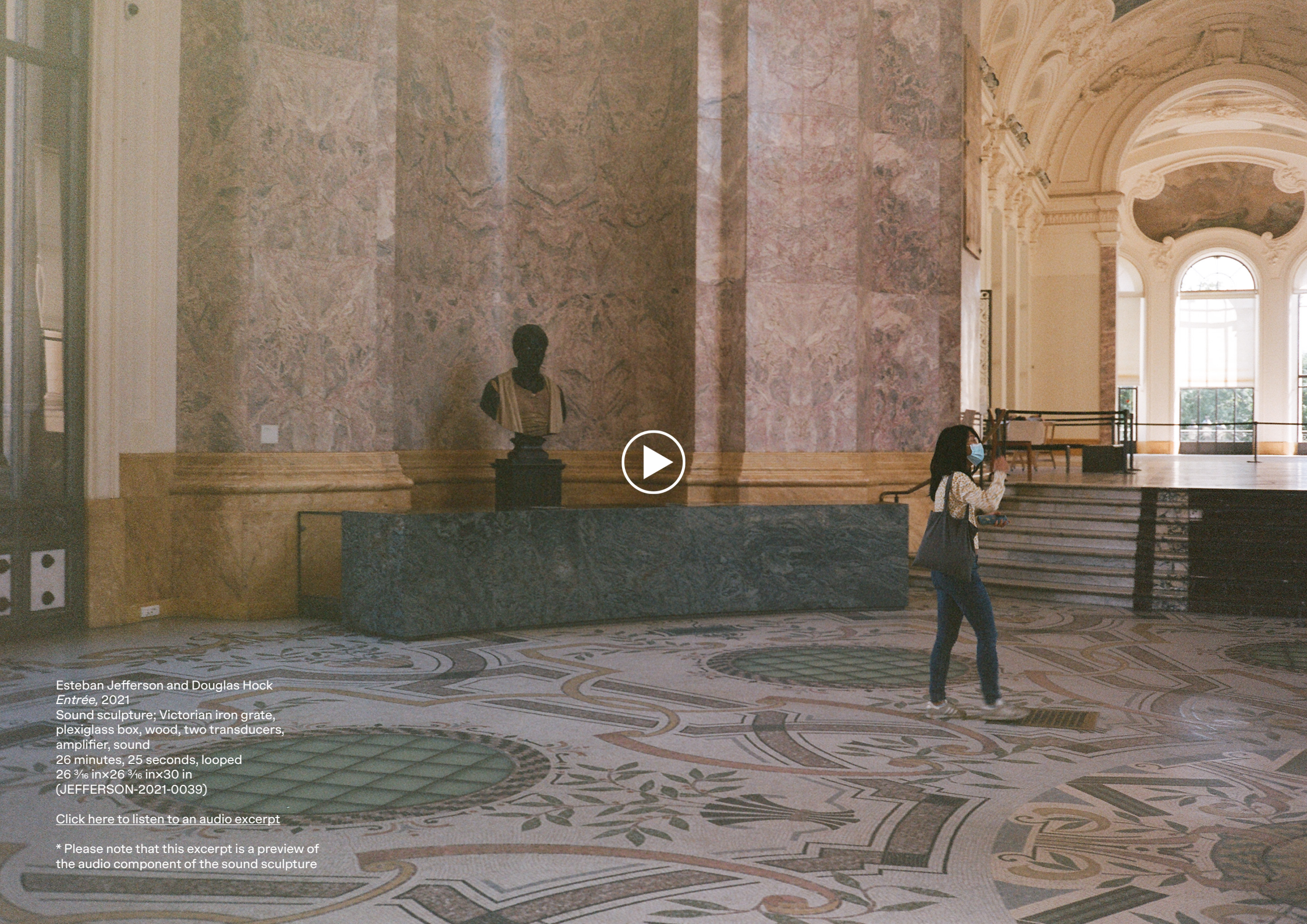




Esteban Jefferson
Label Qualiparis, 2021
Detail

Esteban Jefferson
Wall Label (Buste d'Africaine), 2021
Two channel video
7 seconds and 17 seconds (each), looped
Edition of 4 + 1 AP
(JEFFERSON-2021-0038)





Esteban Jefferson and Douglas Hock
Entrée, 2021
Sound sculpture; Victorian iron grate,
plexiglass box, wood, two transducers,
amplifier, sound
26 minutes, 25 seconds, looped
26 ³/₁₆ in x 26 ³/₁₆ in x 30 in
(JEFFERSON-2021-0039)

[Click here to listen to an audio excerpt](#)

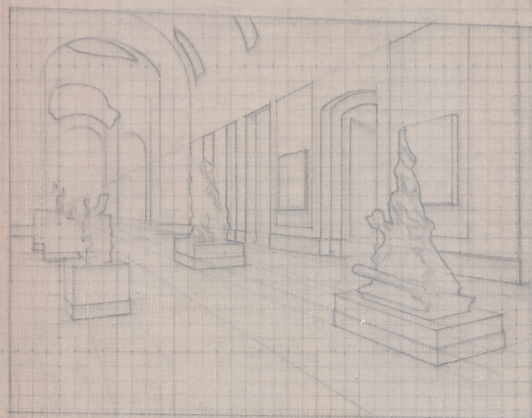
* Please note that this excerpt is a preview of
the audio component of the sound sculpture

Esteban Jefferson
Collections, 2021
Oil on linen
167.6×137.2 cm
66×54 in
Unique
(JEFFERSON-2021-0036)

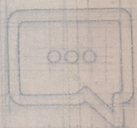


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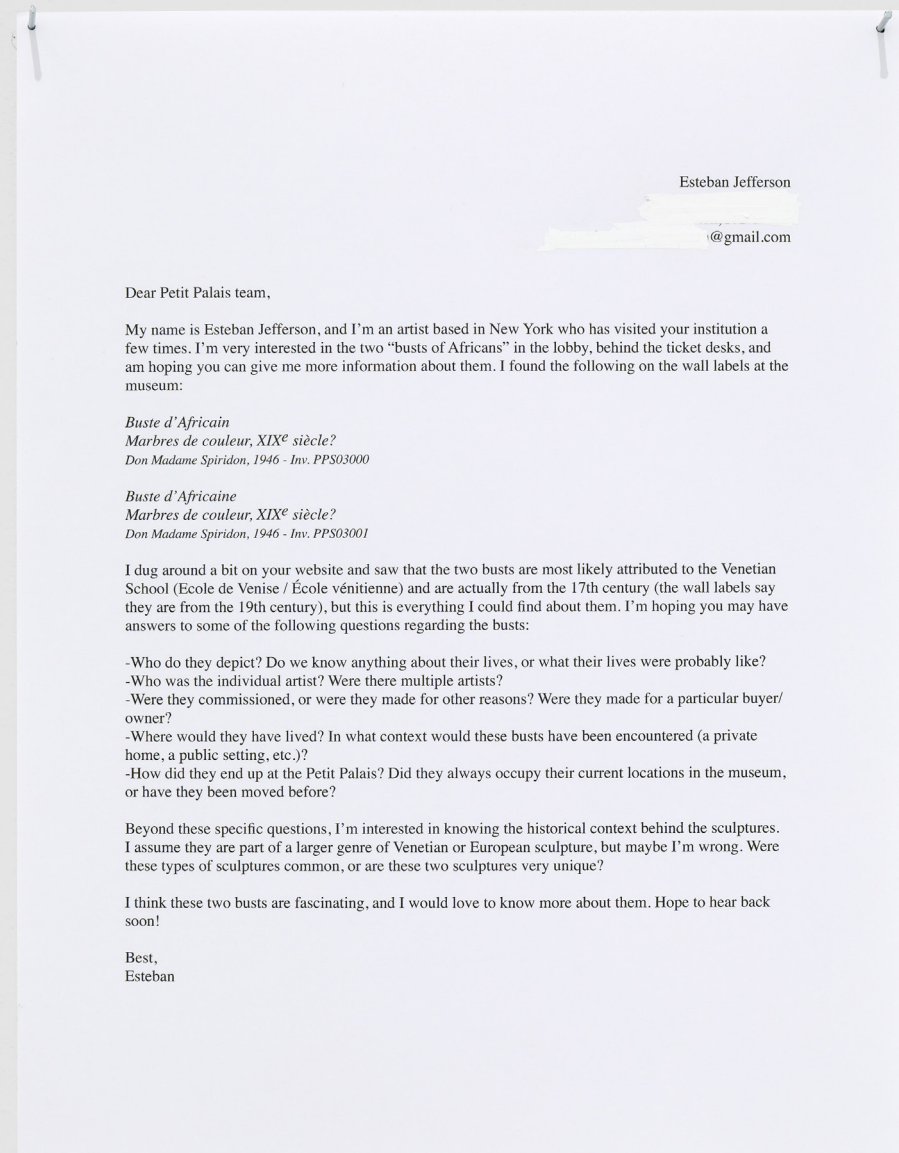


VOTRE AVIS
NOUS INTÉRESSE!

“Adopting a truly institutional language, the artist writes a letter to the Petit Palais inquiring about the busts’ location and documentation and includes a copy of it in the show as evidence of a move from artistic reflection to bureaucratic civil action. Will there be an answer, or will this exercise serve to track the futility of the endeavour?”

— Laura López Paniagua

Esteban Jefferson
Letter to the Petit Palais, 2020
Inkjet print on paper
21.6x27.9 cm
8½x11 in



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