

HOLLIS TAGGART

Hollis Taggart to Open Exhibition Exploring Representations of Sports in Art At Southport Location

***Game On!* Features New and Recent Works by Thomas Agrinier, Zoë Buckman, Royal Jarmon,
Hiroya Kurata, Clintel Steed, and Devin Troy Strother**

On View September 9 - October 30, 2021

On September 9, Hollis Taggart will open *Game On!*, a group exhibition that explores the different ways in which artists engage with and are inspired by sports in their creative practices. The exhibition, which will be on view at the gallery's location in Southport, Connecticut, will feature six contemporary artists, including Thomas Agrinier, Zoë Buckman, Royal Jarmon, Hiroya Kurata, Clintel Steed, and Devin Troy Strother. Through a wide range of sports imagery and references, the featured artists examine the power of sports to inspire; to transcend verbal expression; and to engage with broader conversations about identity, culture, and personal and communal experience. *Game On!* will remain on view through October 30, 2021. An opening reception will be held on September 9, from 5:30 to 8:30 PM.

"I have long wanted to organize an exhibition about art and sports. In so many ways, these disciplines parallel each other—as means of expression, in the drive it takes to succeed, and in the pathways each allows to push perceived boundaries," said Paul Efstathiou, Hollis Taggart's Director of Contemporary Art and the exhibition's curator. "I also see this exhibition as an important entry point for those who may not feel comfortable in an art context. The visual vocabulary of sports is accessible, and so I hope this exhibition also inspires people, who might not otherwise, to become engaged with art."

Thomas Agrinier (b. 1976) is a self-taught artist whose works engage with a wide range of themes, including subjective vision, the body in motion, and the complexity of the human experience. His paintings often depict mysterious and unsettling narratives, where several protagonists appear locked in dramatic conflict—the nature of which eludes the viewer. For *Game On!*, Agrinier will present a series of paintings depicting soccer players. These works feature Agrinier's expressive and bold style, with the athletes depicted through dynamic poses that suggest fierce action.

While Agrinier's paintings emphasize an intensity of movement, **Zoë Buckman's** sculptural installations of embroidered and embellished boxing gloves and bags capture the dichotomy between the feminine and masculine. The works are part of a wider series that Buckman (b. 1985) developed to explore her physical relationship to the spaces and objects in her everyday life, especially those related to traditional women's work as an extension of Buckman's experiences with her mother's terminal illness. In these works, the boxing gloves and bags are adorned or wrapped in dish towels and embroidered with delicate stitches, exploring ideas of strength, support, physical touch, and the dissolution of boundaries between aggression and expression.

Hiroya Kurata's (b. 1980) dreamy scenes of daily activities and landscapes—inspired by both found imagery and personal remembrances—are also laced with emotional resonance. A sense of nostalgia pervades his work, which he produces in bright colors and an exaggerated, cartoonish style. Baseball is a common theme in his work as evocation of childhood moments and memories and in this way the sport becomes a mechanism for expressing personal experiences that feel familiar and communal.

Communal engagement with sports is also central to **Devin Troy Strother**'s depictions of basketball legend Michael Jordan. Strother's wider oeuvre embraces an eclectic array of materials, references, and content, and engages with race issues, kitsch, and the exuberance of "high art." Many of these formal and conceptual threads are manifest in his mixed-media canvases featuring Jordan, which speak to the athlete's mythic status within our culture and the ways in which that mythology unites, inspires, and compels people from different backgrounds and communities.

Royal Jarmon's paintings, sculptures, and works on paper also examine popular culture and the impact of commercialism on our daily lives. Jarmon (b. 1986) frequently employs bold, bright colors and contrasting materials and styles. His paintings of athletes juxtapose realist depictions of the body with cartoonish evocations of faces and environments. The works engage with the caricaturing of sports stars as means of examining the human condition and the absurdity therein.

Clintel Steed's gestural, vibrant paintings also serve as a vehicle through which to consider the world. Often working in series, Steed (b. 1977) creates paintings that reflect his engagement with art history and desire to leverage the formal qualities of paint to capture subjects of personal and universal relevance. For his series depicting scenes from the 2016 Olympics, the artist focused on examining the confluence and experience of movement and time. As the works developed, they also became a platform to explore the athlete as a metaphor and mirror to the endurance and perseverance of daily life.

About Hollis Taggart

Founded in 1979, Hollis Taggart presents significant works of American art, showcasing the trajectory of American art movements from the Hudson River School to American Modernism and the Post-War and Contemporary eras. Its program is characterized by a deep commitment to scholarship and bringing to the fore the work of under-recognized artists. The gallery has sponsored several catalogue raisonné projects, most recently for the American Surrealist artist Kay Sage, and has been instrumental in advancing knowledge of such artists as Alfred Maurer, Arthur B. Carles, and more recently, Theodoros Stamos, Marjorie Strider, and Michael (Corinne) West. In the summer of 2019, the gallery announced the formal expansion of its primary market business and focus on the presentation of contemporary work. It continues to expand its roster of contemporary artists, focusing on emerging and mid-career talents. With more than 40 years of experience, Hollis Taggart is widely recognized by collectors and curators for its leadership, expertise, and openness, on matters of art history, and market trends and opportunities. The gallery's flagship location is in Chelsea, and it also operates a space in Southport, Connecticut.

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