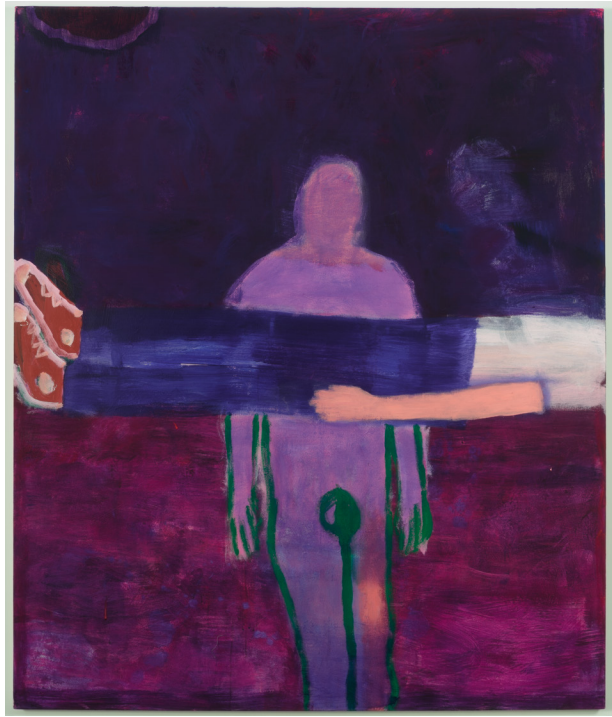


# Carpenter Center



## PRESS RELEASE

*Diedrick Brackens and Katherine Bradford*

September 24–December 23, 2021

Level 3, Sert Gallery

Free and open to the public

The Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts is pleased to reopen to the public with a two-person exhibition of recent tapestries by Diedrick Brackens and paintings by Katherine Bradford. Brackens and Bradford's works resonate within our moment of heightened emotion, isolation, and introspection in the midst of profound change to our social, economic, and public health realities. Both artists create dreamlike scenes that snap back and forth between the symbolic and the specific. Details speak to lived experiences as well as collective histories and memories. With parallel interests in materiality and the act of making, both artists use the specific physical and chromatic qualities of their chosen mediums—paint and yarn—to create ambiguous pictorial spaces that frame relationships between bodies. Their scenes seem to exist both outside and deeply embedded within this uncertain time, evoking cautions, questions, and desires about our bodies in relation to each other.

Diedrick Brackens makes figurative and abstract tapestries using techniques drawn from West African weaving, quilting traditions of the American South, and Euro-

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pean tapestry-making. With an interest in allegory and symbolism, he combines autobiographical narrative with imagery that evokes broader histories of Black and queer identities. Silhouetted figures, plants, and animals move against optically charged passages of pattern and saturated color. Brackens uses traditional techniques to hand-dye cotton yarn, a material that can summon histories of enslavement. Each weaving renders an iconic, tactile, and tender presentation of experiences that feel at once personal and historical.

Katherine Bradford sets characters from her imagination against vast expanses like outer space and the ocean, or within closely cropped, abstract fields defined by her paint's materiality and color. She creates her characters with an economy of painterly marks; they are often featureless and partially clothed. Nonetheless, they announce recognizable character traits in their gestures, body language, and physical relationships. Without the traditional markers of gender, her groups of people exist in collective fluidity, fitting together like indeterminate puzzle pieces. Against color fields that recall the luminous surfaces of midcentury abstraction, her figures play out scenes of adventure, solitude, collectivity, and intimacy.

## DIEDRICK BRACKENS

Diedrick Brackens (b. 1989, Mexia, TX; lives in Los Angeles, CA) received a BFA from the University of North Texas and an MFA in textiles from the California College of the Arts. He has held solo exhibitions at Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, and Various Small Fires, Los Angeles/Seoul. Other solo exhibitions include the New Museum, New York; the Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita; the University of North Texas, Denton; and The University of the South, Sewanee, TN. Recent group exhibitions include Alabama Contemporary Art Center, Mobile; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; the Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco; and Dimensions Variable, Miami. Brackens' work is in the permanent collection of the Brooklyn Museum; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; LACMA, Los Angeles; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and the RISD Museum, Providence, RI.

## KATHERINE BRADFORD

Katherine Bradford (b. 1942, New York, NY; lives in New York, NY and Brunswick, ME) started painting at the age of thirty while living in Maine and was among the group of artists who moved to Williamsburg, Brooklyn in the 1980s. Bradford has exhibited widely at institutions such as MoMA PS1, New York; the Brooklyn Museum; the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, TX; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; the Frances Young

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Tang Teaching Museum, Skidmore College, NY; and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, as part of the fourth Prospect New Orleans Triennial. Her work is included in collections such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Brooklyn Museum; the Dallas Museum of Art; the Menil Collection, Houston; the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland Park, KS; and the Portland Museum of Art, ME. Her work has been shown at galleries including: Canada, Sperone Westwater, and Pace Gallery in New York; Campoli Presti Gallery, London and Paris; Philipp Haverkamp Galerie, Berlin; and Adams and Ollman, Portland, OR, among others. Bradford is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Joan Mitchell Grant. She has taught at institutions such as the Yale School of Art, Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia. A recent monograph, *Katherine Bradford: Paintings*, was published by Canada in 2018. In 2022, Bradford will be the subject of a touring retrospective organized by the Portland Museum of Art in Maine.

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## CARPENTER CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

Free and open to the public, the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts is the center for contemporary art and artists at Harvard University. Through exhibitions, new commissions, public events, publications, and residencies, the Carpenter Center is dedicated to artist-centered programming and to building a vibrant community around contemporary art. This community is defined by an ethos of experimentation, diverse perspectives, and making connections across disciplines and fields. Housed within Le Corbusier's only building in North America, the Carpenter Center's projects are enriched by the educational mission of the Department of Art, Film, and Visual Studies, and the cultural resources of a large research university.

Generous support for Carpenter Center programming is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.

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Andy Warhol

The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

Left: Diedrick Brackens, *shape of a fever believer*, 2020. Woven cotton and acrylic yarn. 84 x 82 inches. Courtesy of the artist; Jack Shainman Gallery, New York; and Various Small Fires, Los Angeles. © Diedrick Brackens

Right: Katherine Bradford, *Brothers*, 2017. Acrylic on canvas. 80 x 68 in. Courtesy of the artist and Canada, New York. Photo: Joe DeNardo.

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