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### THREE CARIBBEAN ARTISTS IN RELATION

NASSAU, BAHAMAS – For their first exhibition of 2024, TERN Gallery is excited to present “**In Relation**” a group exhibition featuring Caribbean artists, **Gherdai Hassell** (Bermuda), **Simon Tatum** (Cayman Islands), and **Drew Weech** (The Bahamas). This exhibition brings together three practices from the Anglophone Caribbean to illuminate intimacy within the personal and the political. Each artist grounds their work in personal anecdotes that push their audience to the ever-present politics of our existence within the Global North; however, they allow tenderness and intimacy to remain in place. “**In Relation**” gives breath to this dichotomy. The exhibition will be on view from February 1st to March 16th, 2024, with an opening reception on **Friday, February 2nd from 7 pm - 9 pm.**

To imagine all things as disparate dismisses the universal need for interconnectivity. In this line of thinking, ecologies become undone, histories are erased, and loneliness brews. Ripe with iconography and sentiment given to the mundane, this exhibition centers works on paper rendered either through collage—whether analog or digital—print-making and painting. For this exhibition, Bermudian multidisciplinary artist **Gherdai Hassell** is presenting collages from her series “Onion Spawn.” Based in Manchester, UK, Hassell’s practice investigates nostalgia and uses collective memory to unearth the origins of narratives surrounding her identifiers. This series explores remnants of colonial Bermuda’s onion production. Though this agricultural economy has waned, the relationship with the landscape persists in interpersonal relationships, with “onion” being a term of endearment.

Through her abstract analog collages, Hassell’s work makes room for the nuances that arise from considering the extent of the influence of Bermuda’s onion industry. Though **Simon Tatum** also uses collages to pull his audience into the Cayman Island’s colonial and tourism history, he starts with perspectives gained through his relationship with his grandmother and other matriarchal figures. As an interdisciplinary artist, Tatum negotiates provenance, global trade, and cultural aesthetics by investigating tchotchkes found within his matriarchs’ homes. Through silk screening, digital collage and video, he presents amalgamations of textures, iconographies and print material to expand the wider implications of these seemingly harmless objects. Tatum pushes us past the ornate; forcing us to engage in the function of the objects’ visuals rather than focusing solely at its beauty and lack of function. The examination of the collector’s curiosity of his grandmother and the other matriarchs serves as a launching pad for his research and the bridging of places and spaces.

Bahamian painter, **Drew Weech**, presents a continuation of his “Nude” series. This iteration centers distorted/pixelated images taken from pornography made in the ’90s. Weech travels through the filters of time, technology and viewership to carve out his own place into this genre of painting. Often thought of as the apex of intimacy, scenes of sexual intercourse are rendered

by Weech into small squares on paper. Up close and afar, the images remain obscured, creating a barrier or consent pushing and pulling the audience into the act. Here, the negotiation to engage or disengage arises, and the audience is left with the tension of the public connotations of being curious about what images may be revealed with time and concentration. In these delicate paintings, Weech presents the unresolved body, as tender and in bloom, in longing or to be left alone.

Although the connotations of pornography usually center on discourses of pleasure, it is at once steeped in political protest for sexual liberation while simultaneously protested against due to sexual exploitation. In the midst of this intrinsically common act, polarities of arguments on its benefits and harm arise, clouding the innate connection it forms with its viewers. Weech does not overtly take a side but veils the material he engaged with, keeping the audience at arm's length.

**"In Relation"** will be on view until March 16th. For more information on this exhibition, email us at [info@terngallery.com](mailto:info@terngallery.com)

**Gherdai Hassell** (b. 1991, Paget, Bermuda) is a China trained, multidisciplinary contemporary artist, writer and storyteller, based in Manchester, UK. Her work investigates memory and nostalgia to create unexpected narratives surrounding identity. She uses collage to thread and weave histories, and tales of transformation passed down through family lineages. Her work typically centers female bodies, simultaneously existing within realms of past, present, and future. Diasporic pasts become re-informed by Black futures, where the resulting present is experienced as living "Artifacts". Her work is an exploration of identity as an exploration of materials. The work suggests that identity should be self-determined and understood, and contextualized through connection with others. Her multimedia work reimagines relationships with the body as avatar, social space and the invisible world. Gherdai Hassell received her bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina Greensboro 2013 and is currently pursuing an MFA in Contemporary Art at the China Academy of Art.

**Simon Tatum** (b. 1995, George Town, Grand Cayman) received his Bachelor of Art degree from the University of Missouri (USA) in 2017, and he received his Master of Fine Arts Degree in Sculpture and Expanded Media from Kent State University (USA) in 2021. Tatum's thesis showcase titled *the Romantic Caribbean* featured at the Kent State University's CVA gallery in March 2021, and he has shown a solo exhibition within the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands, titled *Looking Back and Thinking Ahead*. Multiple group exhibitions include *Arrivants: Art and Migration in Anglophone Caribbean World* at the Barbados Museum and Historical Society (2018) and he participation with the Alice Yard contingent for Documenta 15 in Kassel, Germany (2022), showing posters from his series *See Your Travel Agent*. In 2016, Tatum was honoured with an international travel grant from the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands to attend the *Caribbean Linked IV* residency programme in Oranjestad, Aruba. Moreover, he is also the first graduate scholar sponsored by the Peter N Thomson Family Foundation in Grand Cayman to pursue a graduate programme. Tatum currently works and resides in Nashville, Tennessee.

**Drew Weech** (b. 1984, Nassau, The Bahamas) is a painter based in Harlem, New York. Weech holds a BDes in Interdisciplinary Design from NSCAD University in Nova Scotia, Canada. Working in acrylics, oil sticks, and flashe, his work has been exhibited at the National Art Gallery of The Bahamas, The Central Bank of The Bahamas, as well as other local galleries at home. In 2021, he was an artist-in-residence at the Meeting Point, a collaborative programme between Art Noir, REGULARNORMAL and New York's Meatpacking District. He has participated in group exhibitions at Phillips Auction House, Dinner Gallery with REGULARNORMAL, and Future Fair, New York City, with TERN Gallery where his work was selected as a highlight in a *New York Times* review. Weech explores various historical and contemporary archetypes to vivify his own conflicted feelings about the notion of "home". In relation to his Afro-Caribbean upbringing, Weech uses his practice as a means of pulling the audience into exploring the depths and nuances of existence outside of the paradisiacal gaze.

### Selected Images

Gherda Hassell

*Don't Ask, Don't Tell, 2022*

Ink collage on paper

24 x 18 in.

Simon Tatum

*The Musician, 2023*

Archival inset print on paper

30 x 25 x 1 in.

Drew Weech

*Head No. 1, 2024*

Pastel pencil, graphite on paper

12 x 9 in.

