

# JILL MULLEADY & HENRY TAYLOR – YOU ME

## 02/17/24 – 05/19/24

UPSTAIRS

### I – VII

Jill Mulleady, 2023–2024

*Reclining Conch with Shells*, 2023

*Interior / Window*, 2024

*Interior / Unmade Bed*, 2024

*Interior / Nude Seen from Behind*, 2024

*Oktagon glass and metal sculpture*, 2024

*Stairs / Nude Descending*, 2024

*Interior / The Mirror Room*, 2024

*Interior / Woman at Fireplace*, 2024

In the upper exhibition room, six new paintings by Jill Mulleady depict an interior from multiple angles and perspectives over time. The bed, where a nude figure had recently been lounging, sits empty in the next painting. The rumpled sheets, broken glasses and faded imprints hint at possible prior actions.

As the viewers delve deeper into Mulleady's realm of imagery, they encounter a constant shift between reality and the intangible. Upon closer observation, we begin to notice subtle deviations from the ordinary—perspectives that appear to tilt and curve, and sudden bursts of light that disrupt the image and permeate the surface.

There is an elusive sense of threat throughout the scenes, almost just within reach. The images are constantly shattered by the glimmer of light, the falling of water, and the movement of fog. Mirrors and reflections contribute to this feeling, further deflecting the linear passage of time.

Executed with intricate brushstrokes in subtle shades of pink, green, blue and copper, Mulleady purposefully blends the contours of the figures with the lines and angles of the room, blurring the boundaries between the subject and its surroundings, merging the form with its own reflection and the architectural space itself.

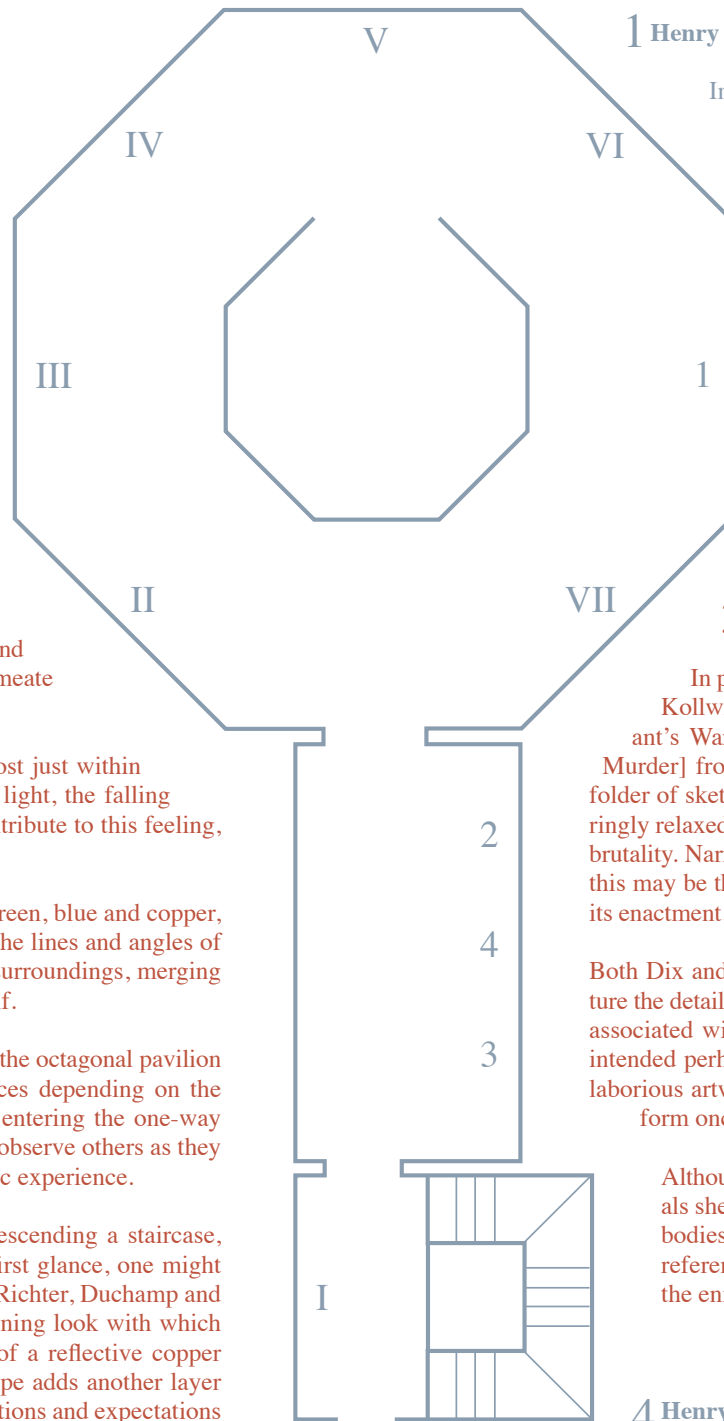
A site specific glass sculpture in the exhibition space transforms the octagonal pavilion into a panopticon, reflecting and absorbing the painted surfaces depending on the viewer's position and drawing him deeper into the room. By entering the one-way mirrored room, visitors are shielded from outside eyes and can observe others as they witness themselves the scenes depicted, suggesting a voyeuristic experience.

Inside the octagonal glass room, a nude figure can be seen descending a staircase, blocking the entrance's view and captivating the viewers. At first glance, one might think that the nude depiction is part of the pictorial tradition of Richter, Duchamp and Taylor. However, upon a closer focus, one notices the questioning look with which the figure directly gazes at the viewer. Additionally, the use of a reflective copper surface that resembles a washy monochromatic Degas monotype adds another layer of complexity, inviting the viewer to reflect on their own perceptions and expectations towards the representation of the female nude.

As Laura McLean-Ferris notes, "Unlike Richter and Taylor's paintings, where the subject looks demurely down, Mulleady's subject looks up defiantly, questioningly. Whilst vulnerable, this subject seems to burn with unresolved energy. It might be a stretch, but this painting seems to depict both the subject and their internal state: the feeling of being a naked person walking down the stairs rather than that of watching someone else do it (Mulleady is sometimes both the painter and its subject)." [Laura McLean-Ferris, *Mirrorworld*, 2024.]

With her own version of a nude descending down a staircase, Mulleady reflects on the historical use of the female nude in painting and questions the traditional space given to the viewer of a visually captivating surface, using it as inspiration to develop her own iconoclastic language.

In addition to her own paintings, Mulleady chose to include two works by Käthe Kollwitz and Otto Dix. The first, called *Vergewaltigung* [Raped], and the second, *Lustmord* [Pleasure Murder]. Dix's etching depicts a scene of extreme violence, with two dogs mating on the foreground, adding a sense of unexpected irony to the brutality. The timing and perspective of the scenes are unclear, leaving the viewer uncertain if they are witnessing the crime or its aftermath. Both Dix and Kollwitz focused on capturing details of poses and expressions, similar to plein air drawing or art studies. By exhibiting these works on paper, Mulleady brings them into a new context once again.



### 1 Henry Taylor, *Emelda*, 2011

In *Emelda*, Taylor portrays a woman lounging on a loveseat, evoking the art historical trope of the reclining female nude. The woman's repose, the setting, and the cat slinking across the back of the couch all recall Manet's controversial *Olympia* (1863). Taylor's signature style, characterized by quick, gestural strokes and a sense of immediacy, imbues the work with a renewed sense of vitality. Typical of his practice, the artist lends his subject a tender, empathetic gaze—inviting viewers into a more intimate contemplation of the scene. Unlike Manet's confrontational *Olympia*, in Taylor's expressive figurative painting *Emelda* appears asleep, her body relaxed and partially obscured by the edge of the canvas, her face blurry and undefined as she cradles it in her arms.

### 2 Otto Dix, *Lustmord*, page no. 2, 1922

### 3 Käthe Kollwitz, *Vergewaltigung*, page no. 2, 1907/08

In parallel with her own paintings, Mulleady selected for display Käthe Kollwitz's *Vergewaltigung* [Raped], from her *Bauernkrieg Zyklus* [Peasant's War Cycle], as well as the second sheet titled *Lustmord* [Pleasure Murder] from the *Tod und Auferstehung* [Murder, Death and Resurrection] folder of sketches by Otto Dix. Explicitly violent etchings, they depict the jarringly relaxed limbs and languid torpor that is the unexpected and ironic wake of brutality. Narrative time is unsettled, and the temporal vantage point unclear—this may be the precursor, or aftermath of a crime, or, chillingly, the moment of its enactment.

Both Dix and Kollwitz's works are originally part of sketch series which capture the details in pose and expression that most interested them with the rapidity associated with plein air drawing and artistic studies. As sketches, they were intended perhaps more as precursor and reference point to more thorough and laborious artworks. Through their recontextualisation by Mulleady they transform once again.

Although not mining the outdoor environment or the postures of individuals she glimpses, in similar vein, Mulleady extracts from the scenes and bodies of the artistic canon. The decision to, in this case exhibit these reference points, lends an additional feeling of unease that interacts with the enigmatic nature of Mulleady's paintings.

### 4 Henry Taylor, *Me Me*, 2023

In *Me Me* Taylor offers a poignant reflection on mortality and familial legacy through a quasi-abstract and surreal portrayal of himself gazing down at his father on a mortuary slab. Against a plain grey background devoid of temporal or spatial markers, Taylor employs loose, expressive brushstrokes to convey a quiet sense of urgency and introspection as he reflects on the uncanny similarities between his father and himself, confronting his own mortality. Through this evocative composition, Taylor navigates themes of identity, loss, and the passage of time with profound emotional resonance.

If not stated otherwise: All works by Jill Mulleady, Courtesy the artist and Galerie Neu

I. Jill Mulleady, *Reclining Conch with Shells*, 2023. Oil on Linen, 130 x 150 cm

II. Jill Mulleady, *Interior / Window*, 2024. Oil on Linen, 130 x 162 cm

III. Jill Mulleady, *Interior / Unmade Bed*, 2024. Oil on Linen, 130 x 195 cm

IV. Jill Mulleady, *Interior / Nude Seen from Behind*, 2024. Oil on Linen, 130 x 195 cm

Courtesy the artist and Gladstone Gallery

V. Jill Mulleady, *Stairs / Nude Descending*, 2024. Oil and Copper Pigment on Linen, 195 x 130 cm

Courtesy the artist

Jill Mulleady, Untitled, 2024. *Oktagon glass and metal sculpture*, 7 panels, each 220 x 138 cm

VI. Jill Mulleady, *Interior / The Mirror Room*, 2024. Oil on Linen, 130 x 195 cm

VII. Jill Mulleady, *Interior / Woman at Fireplace*, 2024. Oil and Copper Pigment on Linen, 130 x 195 cm

Courtesy the artist and Gladstone Gallery

1. Henry Taylor, *Emelda*, 2011. Acrylic on Canvas, 193 x 203.8 cm

Courtesy Collection of Hudgins Family, New York, NY

2. Otto Dix, *Lustmord*, (Folder: *Tod und Auferstehung*, p.2), 1922. Etching, 27.7 x 34.7 cm, Courtesy Buchheim Museum

3. Käthe Kollwitz, *Vergewaltigt*, (Cycle: *Bauernkrieg*, p. 2), 1907/08. Line Etching, 30.8 x 52.8 cm, Courtesy Käthe Kollwitz Museum Cologne

4. Henry Taylor, *Me Me*, 2023. Acrylic on Canvas, 182.9 x 152.4 x 7.6 cm, Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Special thanks to Galerie Neu, Gladstone Gallery and Hauser & Wirth for their generous support. We would also like to thank the public and private lenders for their contribution.

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# JILL MULLEADY & HENRY TAYLOR – YOU ME

## 02/17/24 – 05/19/24

DOWNSTAIRS

### 1 Marcel Duchamp, *Nu Descendant un Escalier*, 1937

From a composition of overlapping geometric shapes and planes, a staircase and the depiction of a figure can be surmised, dissected almost beyond recognition. The movement of the figure resembles a time-lapse photography. Inspired by the sequential motion studies of photographic pioneer Étienne-Jules Marey, the movement lingers in its own echo.

Only the title of this cubist painting reveals what it is actually about. Duchamp's subject in *Nu descendant un escalier* (1912) differs from the traditional depiction of a female nude as he lends the body shape and dynamics of the painting a machine-like, almost dissected quality. The painting was excluded from the 28th exhibition of the *Société des Artistes Indépendants* in Paris in 1912. However, today it is considered one of the key works of classical modernism, and its subject has been revisited many times.

### 2 Henry Taylor, *Forest Fever Ain't Nothing Like "Jungle Fever"*, 2023

In *Forest fever ain't nothing like, "Jungle Fever"* Taylor engages in a playful dialogue with Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863), positioning himself within the lineage of the European canon while asserting his own artistic vision. Depicting figures reclining leisurely in a park beside their low-rider car, Taylor inserts contemporary cultural references into the scene such as an Mbappé jersey, subtly addressing racial politics in sports. One figure rests atop a large animal while another kneels to build a fire, adding a layer of intrigue to the scene. Through this work, Taylor navigates the intersecting complexities of art history and identity, inviting viewers to reconsider familiar narratives within a contemporary context.

### 3 Henry Taylor, *got, get, gone, but don't you think you should give it back?*, 2023

In *got, get, gone, but don't you think you should give it back?* Henry Taylor presents a poignant critique of colonialism and cultural appropriation. Against a backdrop merging the British Museum, the Louvre, and a sailing ship, Taylor references the history of stolen artifacts and enslaved individuals forcibly removed from their origins. In the foreground, Taylor pays tribute to Josephine Baker, the multifaceted icon known for her activism and espionage during WWII. Taylor memorializes Baker as a fountain, capturing her kneeling in front of these symbols of colonialist power. Created during a residency in Paris in the summer of 2023, this work encapsulates Taylor's ongoing exploration of historical injustice and the complexities of identity in the modern world.

### 4 Henry Taylor, *Nude descending down the staircase*, 2017

*Nude descending down the staircase* illustrates Taylor's longstanding engagement with art history, tracing back to his formative education under his 8th grade English teacher through his subsequent studies with James Jarvaise. In this painting, Taylor offers a deliberate homage to Gerard Richter's influential photograph *Ema (Akt auf einer Treppe)*. Both works depict a woman caught mid-step as she descends the staircase in the nude. In contrast to Richter's photograph, Taylor offers a recontextualization that contributes to the nuanced discourse on representation, identity, and the intersecting dynamics of race within the realm of art history.

### 5 Henry Taylor, *Michelle*, 2023

In his painting titled *Michelle*, Taylor captures former First Lady Michelle Obama as a symbol of national significance within the context of a museum. Through modernist abstraction reminiscent of Matisse, Taylor depicts Obama's figure as an Egyptian isis statue, drawing attention to the intersection of personal identity and historical representation. By referencing the origins of antiquities and artifacts, Taylor subtly critiques systems of power and access to cultural heritage. The scale of the figure within the frame invites ambivalent interpretations, suggesting both power and a sense of disconnection. In this work, Taylor merges the significance of the Obamas with his distinctive, loose painting style, prompting contemplation on the interplay between personal narratives, historical legacies, and artistic expression.

### 6 Henry Taylor, *Untitled (Ardmore Taylor)*, 2022

In *Untitled (Ardmore Taylor)*, Taylor captures his eldest brother, Ardmore, seated in a chair against a golden-yellow background. As the youngest of eight siblings, Taylor's depiction of his eldest brother holds personal significance within his familial narrative. Taylor's signature loose brushstrokes suggest a spontaneous and intimate portrayal—while Ardmore's face is detailed, the gestural nature of the brush marks Taylor uses to paint Ardmore's feet suggest he is restless, in movement. The rich, flat background pays homage to Beauford Delaney's modernist aesthetic.

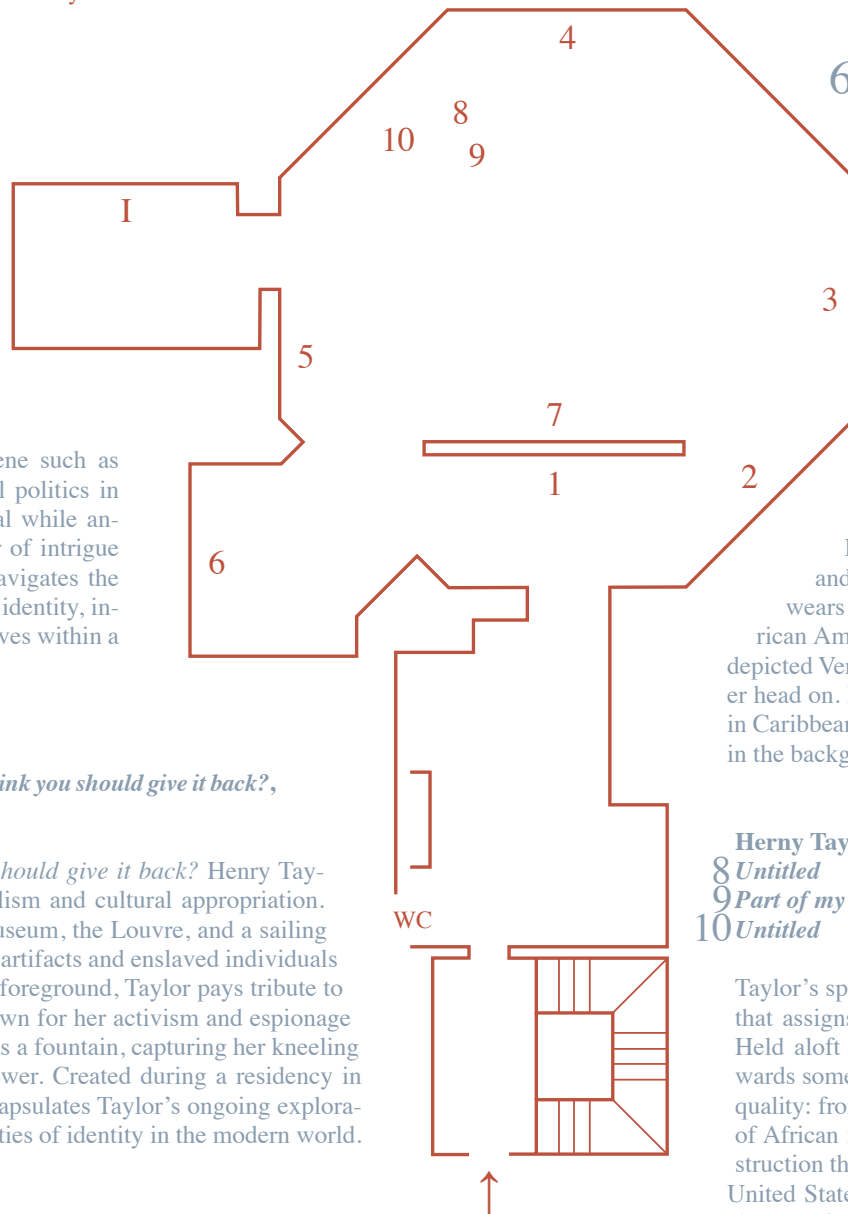
### 7 Henry Taylor, *'Another country,' Ben Vereen*, 2023

In *'Another Country,' Ben Vereen*, Taylor portrays the Broadway star and television icon Ben Vereen. Dressed in dark green jumpsuit, Vereen also wears a Phi Beta Sigma pendant—a symbol that represents the historically African American fraternity he belonged to. A close friend of the artist's, Taylor has depicted Vereen sitting contemplatively against a deserted landscape, facing the viewer head on. In the foreground, Taylor has painted a large conch shell, typically found in Caribbean waters, while the Statue of Liberty rises from the cobalt blue brush mark in the background.

### Henry Taylor, all 2022

- 8 *Untitled*
- 9 *Part of my past*
- 10 *Untitled*

Taylor's spindly sculptures play on pareidolia: that mechanism of human perception that assigns familiar meaning to odd collections of otherwise incongruous shapes. Held aloft by poured concrete, they first call to mind trees, reaching upwards towards some absent sunlight. Their individual components have a similar trompe l'œil quality: from bottles of household bleach emerge faces that seem to mimic the shapes of African masks. Placed as they are at the ends of wooden branches, in their construction they reference the bottle trees of Hoodoo tradition that were imported to the United States by enslaved persons and are used to trap malevolent spirits that whirl about one's home. With the addition of both household and garden objects the series of sculptures is at once playful with the whimsy of bric-a-brac assemblage, and weighted by the items' use as tools of domestic labour.



### Jill Mulleady, *Untitled (Lucretia & Tartin)*, 2023

If not stated otherwise: All works by Henry Taylor, Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

- 1. Marcel Duchamp, *Nu Descendant un Escalier*, 1937. Pochoir, Signed and dated M Duchamp Dec 37, 33 x 20 cm Private Collection, Courtesy Larkin Erdmann Fine Art, Switzerland
- 2. Henry Taylor, *Forest Fever Ain't Nothing Like "Jungle Fever"*, 2023. Acrylic on Canvas, 76.5 x 76 x 3.5 cm
- 3. Henry Taylor, *got, get, gone, but don't you think you should give it back*, 2023. Acrylic on Canvas, 182.5 x 213.5 x 4.5 cm
- 4. Henry Taylor, *Nude descending down a staircase*, 2017. Acrylic on Canvas, 213.4 x 152.4 cm. Courtesy Defares Collection
- 5. Henry Taylor, *Michelle*, 2023. Acrylic on Canvas, 212.7 x 152.4 x 5.1 cm
- 6. Henry Taylor, *Untitled (Ardmore Taylor)*, 2022. Acrylic on Canvas, 182.9 x 152.4 x 7.6 cm
- 7. Henry Taylor, *'Another country,' Ben Vereen*, 2023. Acrylic on Canvas, 213.4 x 152.4 x 6cm
- 8. Henry Taylor, *Untitled*, 2022. Mixed Media, 241.3 x 66 x 40.6 cm
- 9. Henry Taylor, *Part of my past*, 2022. Mixed Media, 205.7 x 33 x 38.1 cm
- 10. Henry Taylor, *Untitled*, 2022. Mixed Media, 196.9 x 63.5 x 83.8 cm
- 1. Jill Mulleady, *Untitled (Lucretia & Tartin)*, 2023, Oil and Copper Pigment on Linen, each 120 x 90 cm. Courtesy the artist and Gladstone Gallery