

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Julie Baumgardner, "In England, Glenn Ligon Brings Together the (American) Works that Have Influenced Him," *T Magazine*, June 30 2015



An installation view of "Glenn Ligon: Encounters and Collisions" at Nottingham Contemporary. The exhibition has just moved to the Tate Liverpool. *Andy Keate*

"What holds all this work together — I realized every single one of these artists is American," Glenn Ligon reflects. "And they're all loans from the Tate's collection." Obama's favorite artist has landed in England with an exhibition he's curated — a personal constellation, really — all culled from British holdings. "It's an attempt to show the community around an artist," says the abstract painter, who has more recently branched out as a multihyphenate practitioner. "Glenn Ligon: Encounters and Collisions" clusters 45 artists whom Ligon explains "were very influential in the beginning of my career," as well as now. Traveling from Nottingham Contemporary — "which has really built a strong reputation in the last four or five years," explains Thomas Dane, Ligon's longtime English gallerist — the intimate retrospective docks in Liverpool today at the Tate's waterfront warehouse complex. It goes up alongside "Blind Spot," an exhibition of a series of black pourings by Jackson Pollock — "the man of the hour," Ligon jokes, moments before his own opening.

At the persuasion of Nottingham's Alex Farquharson, Dane explains, the exhibition germinated after Ligon released "Yourself in the World," a collection of essays and interviews about art. Farquharson prompted Ligon to consider how "it could be quite interesting to literalize things that I had thought about

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or written about, make that into an exhibition with objects,” as the latter explains. “Very few artists write well about other artists,” Dane says. “His relationships mean a lot.”

“Dialogue” is a word Ligon uses often in reference to the works he’s chosen, and how they’ve affected his own practice — he wants to “think conceptually and formally” about the minds that have shaped his own art, as well as the story of art itself. Included in the show are Pollock, Willem de Kooning and Franz Kline: “I’m not an Abstraction Expressionist, but I think dedication to paintings comes from an early interest in that work,” he says. David Hammons “is always an artist I look to, try to see everything he does,” he continues, then rattles off more names: Cady Noland, Adrian Piper, Zoe Leonard. He even wrote in an almost-fan-letter in the show’s artist book-cum-catalog to Jean-Michel Basquiat: “We met once... I was shy and you were famous.”

“Glenn Ligon: Encounters and Collisions” is on view through Oct. 18 at Tate Liverpool, Albert Dock, Liverpool Waterfront, England, tate.org.uk.

http://tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/06/30/glenn-ligon-encounters-collisions-show/?_r=1