

MICHAEL KOHN GALLERY

CHIFFON THOMAS

Born 1991, Chicago, IL

Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA

Born and raised in Chicago, IL, Chiffon Thomas received his MFA in Painting from Yale University in 2020 and his BFA from the Art Institute of Chicago in 2014. Thomas is the recent recipient of the Joan Mitchell Fellowship and the Fountainhead Residency. Recent exhibitions include *Antithesis*, Michael Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2021); *Staircase to the Rose Window, P.P.O.W.*, New York, NY (2022); *Dreaming of Home*, Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, New York, NY (2023); *Made in L.A. 2023: Acts of Living*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2023); and his first solo museum exhibition *Chiffon Thomas: The Cavernous*, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT. His work is included in the permanent collections of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL; Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA; Pérez Art Museum, Miami, FL; Norton Museum, West Palm Beach, FL; Speed Museum of Art, Louisville, KY; Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, NH; and X Museum, Beijing, China; among others.

Chiffon Thomas's practice is an interdisciplinary one, ranging across hand embroidered mixed media painting, collage, drawing, and sculpture. Identifying as a trans queer person of color, Thomas' powerful figurative assemblages examine the difficulties faced by defining one's identity in contemporary society. Through contorted figures and fractured compositions that float seamlessly between historical and contemporary styles and references, Thomas portrays a form of self-expression that puts human touch at the forefront of his art. Reminiscent of the diverse, mixed media practices exhibited by Robert Rauschenberg, Faith Ringgold and David Hammons, Thomas' own application of materiality becomes a language for translating cultural references and personal experiences. Raised with a strong religious upbringing, Thomas' work often grapples with conflicting beliefs, values, and desires, primarily using tactile methods of hand embroidery, collaged found material and paint to perform as an expressive visual language that interprets personal feelings of nostalgia, longing to belong, and affirmations of self-identity. Scenes from family photographs are deconstructed into sketches and then built back up with colorful fibers, stitch by stitch. A sense of texture and dimensionality is achieved through the varying weights of thread, which are sometimes densely layered and other times sparse. Domestic scenes appear to shift in and out of focus, resulting in visceral collisions of abstraction and clarity that invite viewers to decode the fraught relations between memory and reality, visibility and understanding.

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EDUCATION

- 2020 MFA in Painting, Yale University, New Haven, CT
2018 Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, ME
2014 Bachelors in Fine Art and Art Education, The School of The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 (forthcoming), Michael Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2023 *Chiffon Thomas: The Cavernous*, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT
2022 *Staircase to the Rose Window*, P.P.O.W., New York, NY
2021 *Antithesis*, Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2019 *Chiffon Thomas: Fractured Reality*, Goldfinch, Chicago, IL
2018 *Soft Show*, Roman Susan, Chicago, IL
2015 *Frayed, Yr It!*, Window Gallery at Roots and Culture Contemporary Art Center, Chicago, IL
Stitched Perception, Intelligentsia Coffee, Chicago, IL

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2024 (forthcoming) *Flaunt: Being the Dream*, Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Art, Brooklyn, NY
GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN: Black Folx and Their Church, Swivel Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
These Mad Hybrids, Royal West of England Academy, Bristol, UK
2023 *Intimate confession is a project*, Blaffer Art Museum, Houston, TX
Made in L.A. 2023: Acts of Living, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA
Dreaming of Home, Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art, New York, NY
Full and Pure: Body, Materiality, Gender, Green Family Art Foundation, Dallas, TX
I've Gone To Look For America, Murmurs LA, Los Angeles, CA
Behind abstract forms, Fragment, New York, NY
Strings of Desire, Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA
2022 *Home/Work*, San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, CA
Young, Gifted and Black: The Lumpkin-Boccuzzi Family Collection of Contemporary Art, Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, Davis, CA
2021 *Bitter Nest*, Perrotin Gallery, Tokyo, Japan
The Body in Art: From the Spiritual to the Sensual, Currier Museum, Manchester, NH
In Practice: You may go, but this will bring you back, Sculpture Center, Long Island

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City, NY

- 2020 *A Chance Encounter, Parts & Labor*, Beacon, NY, curated by Tunji Adeniyi-Jones
Shag: Provocative Textiles, curated by Laura Hutson Hunter, Nashville Scene, Nashville, TN
I Want To Feel Alive Again, Lyles & King, New York, NY
myselfes, curated by Joshua Friedman, Kohn Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
MFA Thesis Show, Yale University, New Haven, CT
Young, Gifted and Black: The Lumpkin-Boccuzzi Family Collection of Contemporary Art, Lehman College Art Gallery, Bronx, NY
- 2019 *Young, Gifted and Black: The Lumpkin-Boccuzzi Family Collection of Contemporary Art*, Osilas Gallery, Bronxville, NY
Paraíso Perdido, Thierry Goldberg Gallery New York, NY
Hand & I, Dorsky Gallery Curatorial Programs, Long Island City, NY
The Poetics of Relation, Gaylord and Dorthy Donnelley Foundation Chicago, IL
Big Painting: Organized by Jonathan Travis, Patrick Parrish Gallery New York, NY
Paraíso Perdido, Thierry Goldberg, New York, NY
- 2016 *Visual Culture Exhibition "Art Wanted"*, Throop Studios, Chicago, IL
- 2015 *Museum of Science and Industry Black Creativity Juried Exhibition 2015*
- 2014 *Fresh JuJu*, Gene Siske, Chicago, IL
- 2014 *Museum of Science and Industry Black Creativity Juried Exhibition* Chicago, IL
MLK Mural Competition International Hostel, Chicago, IL
BFA Exhibition, Sullivan Galleries, Chicago, IL
- 2013 *South Side Community Art Center New Visions Art Exhibition*, Chicago, IL
Museum of Science and Industry Black Creativity Juried Exhibition Chicago, IL
MLK Mural Competition International Hostel, Chicago, IL
SAIC Accreditation Show, Chicago, IL
ExFest Film Screening Stop Motion Animation "Don", Chicago, IL
- 2012 *SUGS Projects Exhibition*, Chicago, IL
MLK Mural Competition International Hostel, Chicago, IL
- 2011 *Museum of Science and Industry Black Creativity Juried Exhibition* Chicago, IL

RESIDENCIES

- 2020 *Fountainhead Residency*, Miami, FL
- 2019 *Yale Critical Practice Fellowship Travel Grant*, Palazzo Monti, Italy
- 2018 *Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture*, Skowhegan, ME
- 2017 *ACRE*, August 3-16th 2017, Steuben, WI

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COLLECTIONS

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA
Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA
Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
Baltimore Museum of Art, MD
Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL
Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA
Pérez Art Museum, Miami, FL
Norton Museum, West Palm Beach, FL
Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, NH
Speed Art Museum, Louisville, KY
Crocker Museum (forthcoming), Sacramento, CA
X Museum, Beijing, China
Bob Rennie Collection, Vancouver, Canada
EMDASH Foundation GmbH, Berlin Germany
Beth Rudin DeWoody Collection, Palm Beach, FL
Diaspora Rhythms Collective Marvin Wells and Patricia Wells, Chicago, IL
Daniel Berger Founder of Iceberg Projects Collection, Chicago, IL

AWARDS

2022 Joan Mitchell Fellow
2015 Museum of Science and Industry Black Creativity Juried Exhibition 2015
Awarded Best of Mixed Media, Best of Ceramic, Chicago, IL
2013 ExFest Film Screening Stop Motion Animation "Don" 2013 Chicago, IL
Best Animated Short Film, Chicago, IL
2011 Museum of Science and Industry Black Creativity Juried Exhibition 2011
Awarded 1st Place Youth Category, Chicago, IL

LECTURES, PRESENTATIONS, WORKSHOPS

2024 (forthcoming) Crocker Art Museum, "Entering the Oculus," Sacramento, CA
Hamilton College, Visiting Artist Series, Clinton, NY
The Aldrich Museum, "Polish", Ridgefield, CT
The Aldrich Museum, "Visual Artist Talk: Chiffon Thomas and
Dr. Alyssa Collins," Webinar
2023 The Leslie-Lohman Museum of Art and Gemma Rolls-Bentley, "Charged
objects: Leilah Babirye and Chiffon Thomas", Podcast

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- Hammer Museum, "Betrothal", Los Angeles, CA
Hammer Museum, "An Expanded Legacy of Assemblage", Los Angeles, CA
San Luis Obispo Museum of Art, "Book Sculpture Workshop", San Luis Obispo, CA
University of California, Los Angeles, CA
Rhode Island School of Design, "Corporeal: An Exploration of Practice",
Webinar
- 2020 Lewis & Clark College, Portland, Oregon
2018 Hull House Creative Spaces, Chicago, IL
2017 Visiting Artist Talk King College Prep Fiber Materials November 7th
& 8th, 2017
University of Chicago Lab School "Civil Rights Legacy Workshop",
September 28th, 2017, Chicago, IL
- 2015 Art Incubator Intersectionality Critique Exchanges 2015, Chicago, IL
Chicago Student Art Education Intramurals, Chicago, IL

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2024 I. Davis-Marks, "29 Emerging Black Artists to Discover This Black History Month, Part 2," *Artsy*, Feb 15
V. Diaconov, "Intimate confession is a project," *e-flux*, Jan 16
T. Akers, "Baltimore Museum of Art acquires its first piece of performance art," *The Art Newspaper*, Jan 12
M. Dieterle, "BMA announces more than 100 acquisitions, including first performance art work, pieces by Native artists," *Baltimore Fishbowl*, Jan 12
- 2023 H. Silver, "Artists explore the meaning of home through the lens of queer and trans domesticity in New York," *Wallpaper*, Dec 14
"Intimate confession is a project", *e-flux*, Oct 23
L. Lockner, "With Resourceful Reclamation, Chiffon Thomas Crafts New Forms From Old Structures", *Art in America*, Oct 12
F. Abdessamad, "On View Now: Two Shows on Domesticity and the Housing Crisis", *Observer*, Oct 12
S. Gaskin, "No Artist Are Outsiders at 'Made in L.A.' Biennial", *Ocula*, Oct 11
D. Rommel, "Is LA the Country's Best City for Art?," *InsideHook*, Oct 3
J. Griffin, "The Hammer Museum's 2023 Made in LA Biennial Contains Surprises for Even the Most Cultured Angeleno," *Cultured*, Oct 2
J. Sancton, "How the Hammer Museum's Diverse 'Made in L.A.' Biennial Expands the Artistic Canon," *The Hollywood Reporter*, Oct 1
E. Cieslik, "A Queer Homecoming at the Leslie-Lohman Museum in NYC," *Whitehot Magazine*, Sep 12
J. Finkel, "Palm Fronds and Car Parts: Assemblage Art in Los Angeles," *The New York Times*, Sep 11

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- R. Kirby, "New At The Aldrich in Ridgefield: 'Chiffon Thomas: The Cavernous,'" *Patch*, 23 August
"Chiffon Thomas: The Cavernous | Opens September 15 at The Aldrich," *Hamlet Hub*, 20 June
- L. Kozak, "Murmurs I've Gone to Look for America," *Flaunt Magazine*, May 17
- D. Bhullar, "Art of embroidery is an extension of personal identity in 'Strings of Desire'", *stir world*, May 7
- "39 artists to participate in 'Made in L.A. 2023: Acts of Living,'" *Art Review*, 20 April
- 2022 T.M. Michie, "Chiffon Thomas", *BOMB Magazine*, Issue 163, Spring
- J. Fateman, "Goings on about Town: Chiffon Thomas." *The New Yorker*, September
- "Young Gifted and Black exhibition at U.C. Davis reassess narratives around an American experience", *Sacramento News & Review*, August 2
- L.M. Labong, "True Colors", *Sactown Mag*, July 28
- M. Laver, "Meet Chiffon Thomas The LA Artist Whose Reconfiguring The World", *Don't Die Wondering*, June 25
- 2021 B.P. Kelly, "The 10 Best Booths at Art Basel in Basel", *Artsy*, June 15
- "8 LGBTQIA+ Artists On Self-Portraiture and Expressions Of Pride", *Artsy*, June 8
- S. Zimmerman-Black, "'I destroy and then I reconfigure' | Antithesis, Chiffon Thomas's New Solo Exhibition, Opens at Kohn Gallery," *Art Zealous*, April 30
- "Chiffon Thomas: Antithesis," *Whitewaller*, April 30
- C. Falco Raez, "Chiffon Thomas | The Artist's Debut Solo Show at Kohn Gallery," *Flaunt Magazine*, April 9
- L. Val, "Chiffon Thomas," *Vacant Magazine*
- A. Bielski, "Chiffon Thomas on learning about yourself and the world through making work," *The Creative Independent*, January 28
- 2020 I. Vakil, "Kohn Gallery's Group Exhibition 'Myself' Explores The Construction Of Identity", *Harpers Bazaar Art*, October 10
- D. Morpugo, "Chiffon Thomas in Conversation with Daniela Morpugo", *ODDA*, October 8
- S. Walters, myself at Kohn Gallery, *Art and Cake*, October 6
- C. Samper, "Exploring Selfhood through Medium at Kohn Gallery, LA", *Art of Choice*, September 26
- M. Bang, "27 Emerging Artists Reflect on the Impacts of Isolation on Selfhood and Community", *L'Officiel Art*, September 14
- Y. Lee, "Inside 'Young Gifted And Black': A Project Celebrating The Great Black Artists Of Our Time", *Vogue UK*, August 28
- 2019 E. Reichert, "Breakout Artists 2019: Chicago's Next Generation of Image Makers" *New City Art*, April 24
- L. DeLand, "Chanel Chiffon Thomas", *Art News*, April 1
- A. Gipson, "Chanel Chiffon Thomas: Fractured Reality// Goldfind Projects", *The Seen Journal*, February 23