

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Threaded Tensions: Chakaia Booker, Raque Ford, Tomashi Jackson, and Mavis Pusey
Selections from Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop
April 4 - 27, 2025

OPENING RECEPTION • Friday, April 4, 2025, 5pm - 8pm

GALLERY TALK by Essye Klempner, Director of Programming and Partnerships, EFA RBPMW • Saturday, April 5, 2025, 1pm - 2pm

Laisun Keane is proud to collaborate with the New York-based Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop (RBPMW) to present *Threaded Tensions*, a group exhibition featuring works by four Black female artists connected to the printshop. The exhibition, showcasing works by Chakaia Booker, Raque Ford, Tomashi Jackson, and Mavis Pusey, will run from April 4 to April 27, 2025, at our gallery in Boston. The Opening Reception will be held on April 4, followed by a Gallery Talk with Essye Klempner, Director of Programming and Partnerships, on Saturday, April 5, at 1:00pm.

In her curatorial text, Klempner highlights the exhibition's timeliness, as RBPMW founder Robert Blackburn (1920-2003) shared a close bond with John Wilson (1922-2015), the subject of a traveling retrospective currently at the MFA Boston and soon at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY. More than frequent collaborators, Blackburn was Wilson's best man at his wedding. Both were lifelong champions of minority artists, and this exhibition complements their legacy, exploring their influence on their communities and the advancement of art. The selected artists in *Threaded Tensions* embody Blackburn's ethos of experimentation, with practices rooted in textiles and printmaking.

Mavis Pusey (1928 - 2019) arrived at the Workshop by way of Jamaica, the homeland of Robert Blackburn's parents. Initially trained in fashion—sewing was a common skill of women of her generation—she ultimately pursued painting and printmaking at The Art Students League under Blackburn's mentor, Will Barnet. After working in Europe at Atelier 17, she returned to New York and became involved with RBPMW. Her compositions often reference urban life through abstraction from dilapidated architecture, invented mechanical gears, and musical notations.

Like Pusey, **Raque Ford** initially pursued fashion before shifting her focus to fine art. Music and pop culture deeply influence her work—evident in her large-scale installations of dance floors and fan fiction. Ford's printmaking process transforms plexiglass into ready-made matrices for monotypes, combining drypoint, chine-collé, and layered text. Her work frequently incorporates personal history, such as references to names of segregated cemeteries—"Hollywood" and "Friendship"—in her mother's Arkansas hometown. She also blurs digital and analog spaces, integrating robotic text, such as automated messages that read, *Reply 'STOP' to stop*.

LaiSun Keane

Tomashi Jackson combines practices of painting, printmaking, video, and sculpture with archival research in areas of public infrastructure and policy. Considering color as both chromatic and social, her work embraces compositional abstraction to investigate the interaction of color and its impact on the perceived value of human life in public space. The works presented are two framed color portraits, one of Nia K. Evans from the 2022 body of work titled "The Great Society" and the other of Michi Meko from the 2017 body of work titled "Interstate Lovesong".

Chakaia Booker's engagement with textiles informs both her sculptural and printmaking practices. While living in New York's East Village, she salvaged her first tire from a burnt-out car, setting the foundation for her signature sculptural style. Much like piecing together fabric, Booker assembles discarded tires into intricate, abstract forms. This instinctive process extends into her printmaking, where she slices, layers, and collages reliefs, lithographs, and chine-collé works, introducing gesture and improvisation. Her tradition of abstraction was influenced by her teacher, Al Loving and others such as Jack Whitten, Mel Edwards and Martin Puryear.

about

EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop (EFA RBPMW) is the oldest and longest-running community print shop in the United States. Not only a co-operative printmaking workspace that provides professional-quality printmaking facilities to artists and printmakers of every skill level, EFA RBPMW is committed to inspiring and fostering its diverse artistic community. Dedicated to the making of fine art prints in an environment that embraces technical and aesthetic exploration, innovation, and collaboration, EFA RBPMW seeks to improve the overall quality of fine art printmaking by providing low cost, unfettered access to printers, equipment, and education. It is with this spirit of openness and inclusion that Robert Blackburn's vision of sustaining this welcoming, creative environment continues to serve as the backbone of the workshop today.

We would like to thank Essye Klempner and Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop, and the artists and their galleries; Chakaia Booker is represented by David Nolan Gallery; Tomashi Jackson is represented by Tilton Gallery; Raque Ford is represented by Greene Naftali Gallery.

For further inquiry, please contact laisun@laisunkeane.com



Mavis Pusey (b. 1928-2019)

Impact On Vibration, n.d.

Work on paper

33 x 22 1/2 in

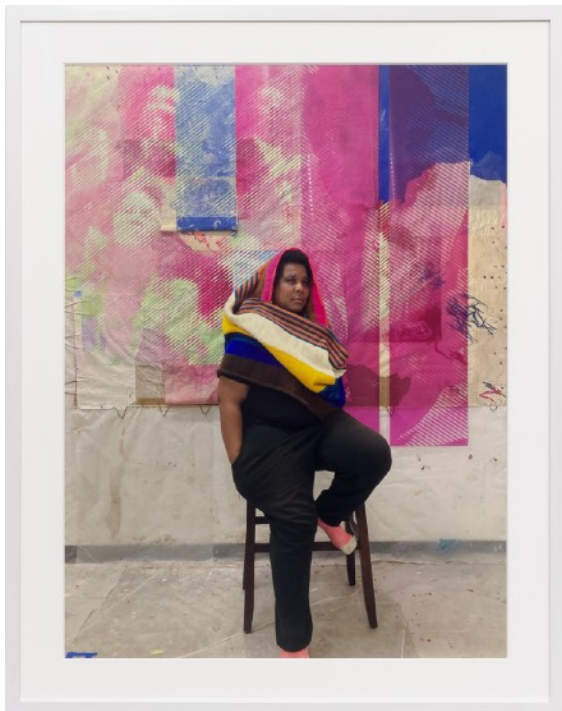
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Top left:

Chakaia Booker (b. 1952)

Untitled (CB.01.22), 2022

Collage, ink on chine collé with embossment

25 1/2 x 20 1/2 in

Top right:

Raque Ford (b. 1986)

Hurt (it's funny across the street you can see Hollywood cemetery), 2022

Oil and watercolor with drypoint with chine collé

46 3/4 x 30 3/4 in

Left:

Tomashi Jackson (b. 1980)

Second Day (Nia in The Emerald City), 2022

C-print mounted on sintra

40 x 30 in

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