

CRISTIN TIERNEY

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Dread Scott *Goddam*

April 28 – June 10, 2023

Opening Reception: Friday, April 28, 6:00 to 8:00 pm

219 Bowery, Floor 2
New York, NY 10002

Cristin Tierney Gallery presents a solo exhibition of new works on canvas by Dread Scott. Entitled *Goddam*, the show features four works inspired by songs sung by Nina Simone: *Goddam*, *Four Women*, *I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to be Free*, and *Pirate Jenny*. *Goddam* opens Friday, April 28, with a public reception from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. The artist will be present.

Taking Simone's 20th-century protest songs as inspiration, Scott's four screenprints on canvas interpret her themes with contemporary vocabulary and iconography. Although decades have passed since the music was first performed, white supremacy and patriarchy remain an intrinsic

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part of America's bedrock. The injustices Simone addressed have clear counterparts in recent history, with Scott's works providing the link between past and present.

The song "Mississippi Goddam" was Nina Simone's response to the murders of Emmett Till and Medgar Evers in Mississippi and the Baptist church bombing in Alabama. Considered her first protest song, the song laments the violence perpetuated against Black communities, calling out the states where the crimes happened. Scott's print repeats the song's utterance "Goddam!" in red capital letters spread across a silver ground. At the center is a black and white image of the US Capitol, flanked by outlines of Florida, Texas, Minnesota, and Georgia. These states are at the forefront of such nationwide problems as brutality, murder, and control of and cruelty to Black people, women, and the LGBTQ+ community. They are places where recent events have spurred nationwide protests and resistance but little change in legislation—except for increasing disenfranchisement of Black people.

Central to the exhibition is Scott's *Pirate Jenny*, based on the song from *The Threepenny Opera* about Jenny, a hotel maid who gets revenge on the arrogant men who torment her. In the song, Jenny is a leader of marauding pirates, and she sails away with them after they've killed her oppressors and destroyed the town. Placed on a saturated blood red canvas and highlighted by gold leaf, Scott's *Pirate Jenny* is a Black waitress or barista, and her persecutor is the police. Screened onto the canvas are drawings of pirates with sabers warding off a cop car, next to photographs from a Black Lives Matter demonstration with a police vehicle set on fire. Are the protestors Scott's modern-day pirates, unleashed by a disrespected barista? The work leaves this question unanswered, inviting us to consider who Jenny's modern-day liberator could be.

The works in *Goddam* bring the struggles of the past into the present, encouraging viewers to acknowledge how the issues of inequality and prejudice faced decades ago are still influencing our present. Violence, racism and sexism are ongoing plagues on our communities. White supremacy is experiencing a return to mainstream politics with a level of visibility that has not been witnessed in years. *Goddam* confronts commonly-held beliefs about America by holding a mirror up to our society, and asking us how much has changed in the years since Nina Simone sang her civil rights era protest songs.

Dread Scott (b. 1965, Chicago, IL) is an interdisciplinary artist who for three decades has made work that encourages viewers to re-examine cohering ideals of American society. In 1989, the US Senate outlawed his artwork and President Bush declared it "disgraceful" because of its transgressive use of the American flag. Dread became part of a landmark Supreme Court case when he and others burned flags on the steps of the Capitol. He has presented a TED talk on this subject.

His art has been exhibited at MoMA/PS1, The Walker Art Center, CAM St. Louis, and Kunsthal KAdE. It is included in the collections of the Whitney Museum, Brooklyn Museum, Montclair Art Museum, Munson-Williams-Proctor Art Institute, Ackland Art Museum at University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, and Worcester Art Museum, and has been featured on the covers of *Artforum* and *The Brooklyn Rail*, and on the front page of *NYTimes.com*. In 2019 he presented *Slave Rebellion Reenactment*, a community engaged project that reenacted the largest rebellion of enslaved people in US history. The project was featured in *Vanity Fair*, *The New York Times*, by *Christiane Amanpour* on CNN and highlighted by *Artnet* as one of the most important artworks of the decade.

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In 2021, Scott received the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, Frieze Impact Prize and a Purchase Prize from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He also completed a residency at KADIST that year and was named a Senior Fellow at the Lunder Institute for American Art at Colby College in Maine. He was the 2019 Open Society Foundations Soros Equality Fellow and has received fellowships from United States Artists and Creative Capital Foundation. In December 2021, ARTnews named his NFT *White Male for Sale* one of the defining artworks of the year. His studio is in Brooklyn, New York.

Founded in 2010, **Cristin Tierney Gallery** is a contemporary art gallery located on The Bowery with a deep commitment to the presentation, development, and support of a roster of both established and emerging artists. Its program emphasizes artists engaged with critical theory and art history, with an emphasis on conceptual, video, and performance art. Education and audience engagement is central to our mission. Cristin Tierney Gallery is a member of the ADAA (Art Dealers Association of America).

Image

Dread Scott, *Pirate Jenny (gold)*, 2022. screenprint and gold leaf on canvas. 56 x 84 inches (142.2 x 213.4 cm).

Inquiries

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