

## Kate Gottgens: A String of Signs

21 September – 21 October 2023



HER GLITTERING EMBRACE (2023)  
KATE GOTTGENS

Huxley-Parlour is pleased to present *A String of Signs*, the first UK exhibition by South African artist Kate Gottgens. With a focus on the suburban domestic, Gottgens explores nostalgia, entropy and the ephemeral. Her work is, in part, inspired by writings of Roland Barthes, for whom all images carry the possibility of multiple meanings: a ‘floating chain of signifieds’.

Comprising 12 new canvases, and a group of new monotypes, the exhibition consists of imagined scenes constructed from de-contextualised imagery drawn from an extensive archive of found, vernacular photographs. Gottgens interrupts an otherwise photographic sense of reality in her canvases with passages of indistinction, self-cancellation or abrasion, echoing the faded, degraded nature of the photographs that gave rise to them. In reappropriating historic imagery, Gottgens seeks to reduce time to a single moment, captured in a single frame of past, present and future. Using intense colour and washes or veils of paint she disturbs and effaces her scenes and figures, resisting the fixity or certainty of objecthood and subjecthood.

The critic Lloyd Pollack has described Gottgens as ‘the faithful chronicler of the ravaged fabric of white middle class family life’ and this latest body of work continues her interest in suburbia and privilege with depictions of outdoor activities and scenes of leisure at swimming pools and on verdant lawns. *A String of Signs* provides some of Gottgens most ideologically incisive compositions to date, with paintings that are charged with the weight of entropy and collapse. Through the repeated use of unstable, transient motifs - balloons, tents, a feather, a lit cigar- Gottgens reveals the precarious nature of an environment in sustained flux and our fragile attempts at a momentary Eden.

Kate Gottgens (b. 1965) graduated from the Michaelis School of Fine Art at the University of Cape Town in 1987. She has exhibited her work internationally, in Europe, India, South Africa and the United States. Her work has been included in *100 Painters of Tomorrow* (2014) and *In the World : Essays on Contemporary South African Art* (2017). In 2019 she won the Ampersand Fellowship Award. She lives and works in Cape Town, South Africa.

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HUXLEY-PARLOUR, 45 Maddox Street, London W1S 2PE

Opening, Wednesday 20 September, 6–8pm

Opening Hours Monday to Friday, 10:00am - 5:30pm  
Saturdays, 10:00am - 1:00pm  
Entry is free

More information can be found online at [www.huxleyparlour.com](http://www.huxleyparlour.com)