

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Alexandre Diop:
Run For Your Life !

5-6 Cork Street
London, W1S 3LQ

Friday 19 September –
Saturday 1 November 2025

Opening: Thursday 18 September,
6–8 pm

Gallery hours:
Tuesday–Friday, 10am–6pm
Saturday 11am–5pm



A Vos marques ! Prêt ! Illegal, 2025

Stephen Friedman Gallery is pleased to present *Run For Your Life !*, a solo exhibition of new paintings by Franco-Senegalese artist **Alexandre Diop**. This marks the artist's debut show with the gallery and his first solo exhibition in London.

Diop's powerful mixed-media works explore themes of history, metaphorical archaeology and socio-political change, with this body of work focusing on the relationship between movement and time, represented by dance or migration. The title of the exhibition, *Run For Your Life !*, is an invitation to stand for change, show tolerance, and be alert to crises around the world. Diop's practice is interdisciplinary; his experience as a dancer, musician, and visual artist allows him to create artworks that transcend traditional paintings.

During the opening, contemporary dancer **Kéwè K. Bonono** will perform *One more*, a piece that engages on topics of athleticism, endurance and resilience within a climate where we are reevaluating the meaning of community to question the general phenomenon that is war.

Physicality is central to the artist's process. Diop's rigorous approach to his work—which he refers to as object-images—combines found and recycled materials such as scrap metal, wood, leather, and textile remnants with classical techniques like oil painting. The materials are sourced from scrapyards, urban streets and derelict buildings, and then transformed through an intensive process of layering, burning, tearing, stapling and collaging onto wood panels. His material language, while firmly rooted in personal and political narratives, also engages with multiple art-historical lineages. His work draws from movements such as Dada, Art Brut, Expressionism and the Viennese Secession, while maintaining a strong dialogue with both West African aesthetic traditions and the visual codes of contemporary urban culture.

Diop's practice is anchored in drawing. He combines calligraphic strokes, symbols, and layered images that are painted, drawn, or sprayed. Figures—both human and animal—emerge from textured surfaces that blur the boundaries of painting, sculpture, and relief. Their stance recalls the awareness of a dancer, attuned to the body's own rhythms. In this sense, the works look inward: they stage a dialogue between movement and stillness, surface and depth, becoming mirrors through which viewers may glimpse fragments of their own inner reality.

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At the same time, Diop's work confronts the world beyond the self. It reflects on how individuals are bound by external forces—systems of illegality, oppression, and exclusion. In *A Vos marques ! Prêt ! Illegal*, 2025, a central figure cries out yet remains unheard, embodying the suffocation of life within unjust structures. The work echoes the story of **Jesse Owens**, the African American runner who won Olympic gold in 1936 under Nazi rule, and becomes a call for freedom, justice, and resilience against overwhelming odds. Diop constructs new worlds where historical, political, and social narratives unfold, offering his figures a space to resist, endure, and reimagine history.

Notes to editors

Alexandre Diop

Alexandre Diop is a Franco-Senegalese artist whose powerful, mixed-media works interrogate themes of ancestry, beauty, violence and social transformation. Drawing upon his experience as a dancer, musician, and visual artist, Diop brings a multidisciplinary lens to his practice, crafting works that are deeply visceral and formally innovative. Alexandre Diop was born in Paris, France in 1995. He lives and works in Vienna, Austria.

Diop's work has been the subject of major solo museum exhibitions. In 2023, his work was presented with 18th century anatomical wax models of bodies and body parts in *Anatomie* at Josephinum Medical Museum, Vienna, Austria. His residency at the Rubell Museum in Miami culminated in a touring exhibition, *Jooba Jubba, l'Art du Défi, the Art of Challenge*, shown in Miami (2022) and Washington DC (2023). In 2022, Diop exhibited alongside Kehinde Wiley in *La Prochaine Fois, Le Feu*, presented by Reiffers Art Initiatives in Paris.

Notable group exhibitions include *Les Apparitions*, Reiffers Art Initiatives, Paris, France (2025); *De Sculptura*, Albertina Klosterneuburg, Klosterneuburg, Austria (2025); *The Beauty of Diversity*, Albertina Modern, Vienna, Austria (2024); *Being Mortal*, Dom Museum, Vienna, Austria (2023); *The New African Portraiture*, Shariat Collections, Kunsthalle Krems, Krems an der Donau, Austria (2022); and *Le Mouton Noir*, Gesso Art Space, Vienna, Austria (2021).

Diop's works can be found in the collections of Albertina Museum, Vienna, Austria; AMA Venezia, Venice, Italy; AMOCA, Cardiff, Wales, UK; Espacio Tacuarí, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Josephinum Medical Museum, Vienna, Austria; Kunsthalle Krems, Krems an der Donau, Austria; MB Collection, Germany; National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington DC, USA; Reiffers Art Initiatives, Paris, France; Rubell Museum, Miami, Florida and Washington DC, USA; Ståhl Collection, Norrköping, Sweden; Stora Wäsby Public Collection, Stockholm, Sweden and The Bunker Artspace, West Palm Beach, Florida, USA.

Stephen Friedman Gallery

Stephen Friedman Gallery is a contemporary art gallery that was founded in 1995 with a focus on representing exceptional artists from around the world. Since its inauguration, the gallery has been based in Mayfair, London. In October 2023, the gallery expanded and relocated to Cork Street. In November 2023, the gallery opened its first location outside the UK at 54 Franklin Street in Tribeca, New York.