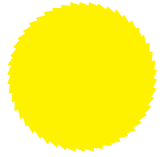


DREAMSONG

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NICOLE HAVEKOST +
TA-COUMBA T. AIKEN
FRIEZE LA 2023

*February 16 - 19, 2023
Santa Monica Airport, Los Angeles
Booth F16 (Focus Section)*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 2, 2023, MINNEAPOLIS -
Dreamsong's presentation in the Focus section of Frieze LA marks the gallery's first art fair since opening the space in June 2021. The booth will feature recent work by Minnesota-based artists Ta-coumba T. Aiken and Nicole Havekost, both of whom have spent decades developing visual languages that speak to their lived experiences through materially innovative approaches to painting, collage and sculpture.

In paintings and works on paper

rooted in abstraction, with particular affinities to the work of Norman Lewis and Romare Bearden, and alongside a renowned public art practice ignited through John T. Biggers' mentorship, **Ta-coumba T. Aiken** has spent decades channeling the spirits of his ancestors through form and color. A 2022 Guggenheim Fellow, Aiken's work is rooted in a deep engagement with Black history and culture. In a recent essay on the artist, Siri Engberg, Senior Curator and Director of Visual Arts at the Walker Art Center, notes that "Aiken is part of a lineage of Black

abstract artists who have employed strategies of abstraction as containers for deep meaning, and as explorations of the personal, the historical, and the social."

In the 1970s, inspired by the Black Arts Movement, Aiken learned African drumming, and he is also a dancer and violinist. Drawing on this musical training, he roots his work in a compositional form of call and response, where figures, lines, shapes, and colors vibrate across abstract fields, embodying multiplicity as they echo through infinite permutations. A vessel for the collective memory of his community, the artist begins each painting with intuitive freeform underpaintings which he terms *Spirit Writing*. Upon these serpentine gestures, Aiken accumulates rhythmic motifs in symphonic visions of his ancestral history.

Aiken frequently masks portions of his canvas with tape that is overpainted and removed. These remnants are then repurposed into small-scale tape collages containing enigmatic vestiges of his brightly-colored brushwork. At Frieze, Dreamsong presents several of these collages alongside recent paintings.

Nicole Havekost (b. 1970)

painstakingly sews anthropomorphic soft sculptures and other somatic forms that ooze, decay and loom. Akin to drawing in space, stitching is a labor-intensive practice of mark-making. For Nicole, "Piercing, pulling and closing each stitch is aggressive and restorative. Stitching is an act of accumulation; it is a collection of marks, moments and

attachments that give shape to a form."

Havekost's practice centers on the female body, which she reimagines as a sovereign organism that is simultaneously exquisite and abject. The work reminds us that despite our desire to tame and groom our bodies, corporeality is inescapable. In a [video](#) produced by the Minneapolis Institute of Art related to her exhibition *Chthonic* (2020), Havekost says, "I have spent most of my adult life trying to control my body and make it do and be exactly what I thought it should be and it turns out, your body has other desires and needs."

For a recent series of work titled *Sheath*, the artist collected a dizzying array of materials, including beeswax, cat whiskers, horsehair, and volcanic sea salt, to create objects that read like the preserved skins of mythological creatures. For Frieze LA, Dreamsong's presentation will include a selection of these objects alongside monumental felt sculptures.

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Ta-coumba T. Aiken
A World of Confusion, 2022
Acrylic on canvas
72 x 72 inches



Nicole Havekost

Sustain, 2023

Wool felt, thread, paper, electrical
conduit pipe, plywood, hooks and eye
75 x 21 x 25 inches