

CASEY KAPLAN

121 WEST 27TH STREET

NEW YORK NY 10001

TEL +1 212 645 7335

WWW.CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

INFO@CASEYKAPLANGALLERY.COM

Igshaan Adams

Verkenning

May 8 – July 25, 2025

Casey Kaplan is pleased to present Igshaan Adams' third solo exhibition, *Verkenning*, translating from Afrikaans as "to explore or the process of gaining knowledge." In a series of wall-based tapestries, hanging sculptures, and three-dimensional weavings spanning 2023 – the present, Adams decodes communal and individual material histories by treating movement as medium.

The progress of individual action is inherently tied to the activity of the collective—within its parameters, personal impetus drives a steady unearthing of the self. By tracking the migration of communities, the time stain of domestic pathways, or the rhythmic dance of the body, Adams explores how, within unlikely places, suppressed memory is dislodged and reinvented. As a child of apartheid in South Africa, Adams navigated the constraints of a layered identity within the boundaries of race, class, and religion in Bonteheuwel, a former segregated suburb of Cape Town. As these restrictions shaped the cultural and physical landscape, Adams learned to disrupt that space through a multidisciplinary practice that included subversion of ritual, reinvention of tradition, and elevation of queer identity. Through weaving, sculpture, installation, and performance, Adams communicates how the body holds and regenerates these histories with deliberation and in spite of itself. Drawing inspiration from his own narrative and the rigid space that binds it, Adams employs his community, through concept and action, to sculpt new stories of resistance, survival, and, ultimately, healing.

Adams highlights the redrawn, human-made lines in Heideveld (a suburb in the Western Cape) in a fragmented, multi-part series of densely woven tapestries and hanging sculptures that dominate the gallery's entrance. Using an aerial map to start, Adams zooms in on the footpaths carved by individual use—a practice that alters the socio-economic terrain through sustained movement and the courage of those who first traveled it. Originally displayed as the site-specific installation "Lynloop" at the ICA Boston (2024 – 2025) as part of his "Desire Line" series, Adams reconstitutes the work here, cutting up and regrouping the surrounding pathways of an established route in irregular patterns and varying scales. Materials are woven in tones of pink and coral in a final act of defiance; wire "clouds" hang loosely throughout the space, entangled in an ephemeral forest of muted pastel hues. With locally sourced glass, wood, plastic beads, mohair, rope, tiger tale wire, and rose gold chain, Adams softens the edges of a hyper-masculine and, at times, treacherous neighborhood, retelling and nurturing a story from the recesses of a harsh memory. In this subversion, Adams imagines an altered experience that encourages a literal and spiritual migration away from the status quo towards a place of promise.

Akin to the residue left behind by collective movement (of ancestors and localities), Adams' series of dance print tapestries memorialize the individual footwork of members in the Garage Dance Ensemble, a dance troupe based in O'okiep, in the Northern Cape Province. In an ongoing collaboration that began in 2023 and spanned two countries, Adams encourages dancers to intuitively travel across a blank canvas laid atop an ink covered sheet of plastic, while imprints of their steps are recorded on the reverse. With the rectangular encasement acting as a boundary, the dancers burst from it – their bodies acting as catalysts for change, liberated from the reality that binds them. Movement, here, is medium – each action stirring an internal memory bank, propelling pain into resistance into eventual joy. The resulting image is a collage of scattered footprints and singular gestures, each conveying a unique life story, later repurposed by Adams as a template for weaving. Within the works' densely woven surface, markings of the body are embellished with patches of vibrantly colored beads, cotton twine, fabric, rope, chain, and swathes of mohair as each tapestry is titled after its individual dancer(s).

Adams' recent works act like thresholds between a weighted past and a lighter future, hanging loosely off the wall like dreamcatchers. Whereas the surrounding tapestries are resolute in their weave, these works possess a permeability, hovering in space with open, unwoven areas and irregular, loose ends. Mostly produced with metallic beads, chain, earrings, and motivational charms, these free-floating tapestries also replicate the imprints of dancers, leaving bare the areas where bodies meet the ground. The contrast between the dense material and the open weave produces the effect of a topographical map as the holes nestle into a pseudo terrain. Like the recessed pathways that scale the gallery walls, these tapestries manifest individual and communal longing, trapping and simultaneously dislodging memory through movement. Here, and in Adams' life and practice in sum, the trajectory of a life's journey is altered through resistance and self-will, despite its circumstance.