

Pilar Corrias

Press Release

Perpetual Motion Machines
9 July–20 September 2025

Pilar Corrias
51 Conduit Street
London W1S 2YT



Christina Quarles, *Yull Always Be a Part a Me*, 2025. Courtesy the artist, Pilar Corrias, London and Hauser & Wirth.

+44 (0)20 7323 7000
info@pilarcorrias.com

51 Conduit Street
London W1S 2YT

2 Savile Row
London W1S 3PA

For all press enquiries,
please contact:
Katrina Millar
+44 (0)7769 775 651
katrina@pilarcorrias.com

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Pilar Corrias is pleased to present *Perpetual Motion Machines*, a group exhibition featuring work by **Pacita Abad**, **Loie Hollowell**, **Christina Quarles**, **Tschabalala Self** and **Mickalene Thomas**.

Taking as its starting point the concept that perpetual motion machines create energy indefinitely, this exhibition brings together works that explore the tension between movement and stillness in painting. Painting, though traditionally a still medium, has long sought to capture movement, energy and the fluidity of thought and emotion. Within these new and historical works, there is an extraction and projection of energy that has been distilled to communicate the intricate lives of women. Unique approaches to painterly techniques fuse, playing with pace and impressions of movement.

Pacita Abad was a Filipino American visual artist whose pioneering work is characterised by vibrant colours and an accumulation of processes and materials. She is best known for her *trapunto* paintings, a form of quilted painting the artist originated by stitching and stuffing her painted canvases as opposed to stretching them over a wood frame. Abad's richly detailed abstractions are inspired by Korean ink brush painting and Indonesian Batik (a textile that uses wax and dyes to create dots widely arranged in stunning patterns and designs). Exploring a range of materials and textures, Abad's abstraction paintings play with line and colour to imbue energy through carefully constructed static patterning. Notes from musical genres such as Jazz and the Blues, both essential to Abad's life and studio environment, echo across the artist's abstracted canvases, shaping the physicality of her paintings.

Loie Hollowell's practice explores the intersections of abstraction, figuration and optical tensions drawn from the bodily landscape. Working with geometric symbolic shapes such as the mandorla, ogee and lingam, Hollowell anchors her compositions in a central, singular axis, melding sculpted, protruding forms that confound expectations of painting. References from the California Light and Space Movement and Neo-Tantric painters are woven into Hollowell's visual lexicon. Within her new suite of works, the concentric shapes and reverberations of colour create a visual play that hints at different anatomical imaginaries. Primary colours create formal spaces that hold and direct energy points within Hollowell's compositions. This sense of depth and gradual

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pulsation considers the dramatic evolutions of the female body in particular and the idiosyncracies of our interior worlds.

Through her paintings, **Christina Quarles** depicts entangled, ambiguous figures that defy rigid definitions, echoing the instability of identity and perception. Through expressive, gestural mark-making and a rejection of fixed perspective, Quarles creates compositions that appear to be in constant motion. Her work extends beyond the physicality of all-over painting to explore themes of personal and cultural hybridity, blurring the boundaries between body, space and abstraction. On *Yull Always Be a Part a Me*, 2025, Quarles writes: 'Forms, both in the figuration and the tree, are repeated and distorted, a shadow of what was, a projection of what is yet to be (or perhaps can never be). There's no way for me to hide my emotional state while making the work; there are moments of sadness with this painting, but also moments of vibrancy and a sense of liberation.'

Tschabalala Self's figures are kaleidoscopic and layered. Through the use of various materials and textiles, including cut canvas itself, her paintings are deconstructed and rearranged. Her works transform traditional spatial organisation. There is a cyclical energy evident in each work that transcends linear understanding. The complexity of her oeuvre reflects the dynamic quality of her figures, predominately women. The formal and conceptual aspects of Self's work seek to expand her critical inquiry into selfhood and human flourishing. Her work extends beyond the physicality of painting and explores themes of personal and cultural hybridity, the boundaries between body and mind, figuration and abstraction.

Mickalene Thomas brings a vibrant and layered approach to all-over composition, using collage, photography and sculptural surfaces to infuse her paintings with a palpable sense of motion. In her *Tete de Femme* series (translated as 'head of a woman'), Thomas merges 20th-century Cubism and contemporary pop references, playing with the formal qualities of portraiture whilst simultaneously reclaiming and reimagining representations of Black femininity and beauty. Thomas's geometric collaged cut-outs shimmer with energy as materials reflect layers of movement across the picture plane. Rather than focusing on a single subject or element, her paintings invite viewers to engage with every part of the surface, absorbing a complex interplay of patterns, textures and forms.

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In 2023, **Pacita Abad** (1946-2004) was the subject of a major retrospective that opened at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, and subsequently travelled to San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, MoMA PS1, NYC and the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. Selected solo exhibitions include: Kunsthau Zurich; *Pacita Abad: Philippine Painter*, Metropolitan Museum of Manila; *I Thought the Streets Were Paved With Gold*, Jameel Arts Centre, Dubai; *Life in the Margins*, Spike Island, Bristol and *Pacita Abad: A Million Things to Say*, Museum of Contemporary Art and Design, Manila. Her work has been featured in notable group exhibitions including the 60th Venice Biennale; the 58th Carnegie International; 11th Berlin Biennale; 13th Gwangju Biennale and the 2nd Havana Biennial.

Loie Hollowell (b.1983, Woodland, California, USA) currently lives and works in New York City. Her work has been exhibited at museums and galleries worldwide including the Institute for Contemporary Art at VCU, Richmond, Virginia; The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, Connecticut; Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, University of California, Davis; Pace Gallery, New York, Los Angeles, London, Hong Kong, Seoul, Geneva, Tokyo; Jessica Silverman, San Francisco; Long Museum West Bund, Shanghai; White Cube Gallery, Paris; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; The Flag Art Foundation, New York; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas; Victoria Miro, London; and Ballroom Marfa, Texas among others.

Christina Quarles (b. 1985 Chicago, USA) currently lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. Selected solo exhibitions include: *Living in the Wake*, Kistefos, Norway (2025); *In the Shadow of Burning Light*, Gammel Strand, Copenhagen, Denmark (2024); *Tripping Over My Joy*, Pilar Corrias, London, UK (2023), *Collapsed Time*, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2023); *Christina Quarles*, Frye Museum, Seattle (2022); *In Likeness*, South London Gallery, London (2021); *Dance by the Light of the Moon*, X Museum, Beijing (2021); *Christina Quarles*, MCA Chicago (2021) and *I Won't Fear Tumbling or Falling/If We'll be Joined in Another World*, Pilar Corrias, London (2020). Quarles was included in the 59th Venice Biennale *The Milk of Dreams*, curated by Cecilia Alemani and the 16th Biennale de Lyon, curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath.

Tschabalala Self (b.1990 Harlem, USA) lives and works in Hudson Valley, New York. Recent solo and group exhibitions include: Longlati Foundation, Shanghai (2025); Espoo Museum of Modern Art, Espoo (2024); Highline, New York (2024) Brooklyn Museum, New York (2024); FLAG Foundation, New York (2024); Barbican, London (2024); CC Strombeek, Grimbergen, Belgium (2023); Desert X, Coachella Valley (2023); Kunstmuseum St Gallen (2023); Le Consortium, Dijon (2022); Performa 2021 Biennial, New York (2021); Haus der Kunst, Munich (2021); Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf (2021); Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore (2021); ICA, Boston (2020); Studio Museum Artists

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in Residence, MoMA PS1, New York (2019); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2019); Frye Art Museum, Seattle (2019), amongst many others.

Mickalene Thomas (b. 1971, Camden, NJ, USA) currently lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Selected solo exhibitions include: *Mickalene Thomas: All About Love*, The Broad, Los Angeles (2024); *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven (2023); *Mickalene Thomas: Femmes Noires*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2021); *Mickalene Thomas: Better Nights*, Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach (2019); and *Origin of the Universe*, Brooklyn Museum, New York (2012). Her work has been featured in major international institutions including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. Thomas was a co-producer on the Tony-nominated Broadway production *For Colored Girls* (2022) and has curated exhibitions globally, highlighting underrepresented artists and challenging dominant narratives in contemporary art. In 2023, she became the first Black queer femme artist to have a scholarship endowed in her name at Yale University School of Art, her alma mater.

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