

# ROBERTS & TILTON

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 21, 2017

Jeffrey Gibson  
IN SUCH TIMES  
September 9 – October 21, 2017  
Opening Reception Saturday, September 9<sup>th</sup>, 6-9pm

Roberts & Tilton is pleased to present *IN SUCH TIMES*, a comprehensive exhibition of new work by Jeffrey Gibson. Drawing influences from popular music, fashion, literature, theory, and his own Cherokee and Choctaw heritage, Gibson's work recontextualizes the familiar to offer a succinct commentary on cultural hybridity and the assimilation of modernist artistic strategies in contemporary art.

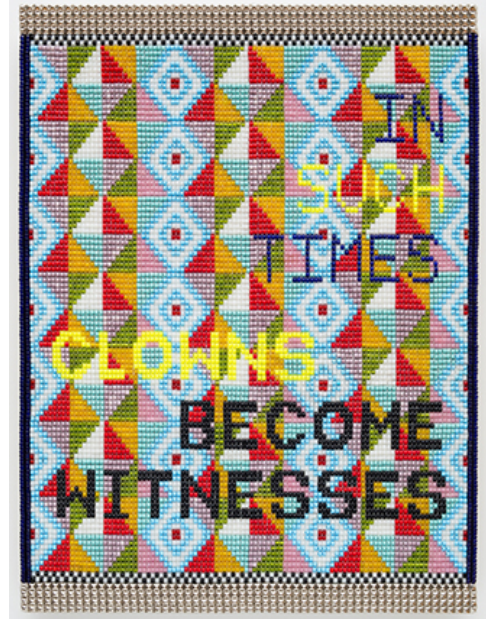
"In such times, clowns become witnesses" are the words of American writer Nelson Algren, as quoted in Sister Corita Kent's 1968 serigraph *Damn Everything But The Circus*. Furthermore, the title of Kent's print references the opening words from E.E. Cummings' *Him: A Play*, which proclaims "Damn everything but the circus!" (1927). Much like the central character in Algren's books, the clown – always the eternal outsider – attempts yet never succeeds.

Gibson's current body of work, produced in one of the most politically tumultuous times in recent history, uses exquisite simplicities, concise statements, and commanding clarity to express the constructions of human life and its intersectional connections. The revolutionary message of this particular aesthetic lies in its visceral interpretations and appropriations politicized through personal investment. Gibson's interplay of word and form deftly reveals the micro-visible notations of a larger network of cultural and visual Imperialism set to the beat of our musical and literary greatest hits.

Gibson's ongoing series treats the punching bag as both object and metaphor. Elevated as art and adorned with metal jingles, steel studs, fringe, and beads, the punching bags challenge the original function of the bag in an effort to push back against sustained abuse. The two works on view – *POWER POWER POWER*, 2017 and *LOVE IS THE DRUG*, 2017 – address how constructions of colors and symbols, such as the LGBTQ Rainbow flag or indicators of race, have inherent meanings beyond their formal qualities. Texts appropriating lyrics from the hymn *Amazing Grace, Back to Life* by Soul II Soul, and *I've Got To Use My Imagination* by Gladys Knight and The Pips alongside quotes from Nelson Algren, Raymond Carver, and Reverend Emmett Dickinson highlight charged political issues and social turmoil. In Gibson's hands, the sweetness of pop becomes a tool for his own personal philosophical ruminations. Accompanying beaded wall works and tapestries continue his narrative deconstructions of both image and language.

The forms in Gibson's beaded panels and tapestries are suggestive of the most primary elements: the landscape, patterns, and religious iconography. Geometric forms radiate outward into imaginative planets, centers, networks of incomprehensible possibility. The tapestries are made to the fact of their contemporaneity, incorporating a multi-dimensional perspective to the 20th Century Southwestern trading-post textiles they reference. Graphics repurposed through Minimalist and post-Minimalist aesthetics speaks to the revisionist history of Modernism.

The dominant culture changes the natural world to suit itself; those in the underground adapt themselves to navigating the world as it is. The key to Gibson's work is the tension between those perspectives. *IN SUCH TIMES* is a spectacular affirmation of the struggle past language, personal and cultural incongruities. The end results are works which seamlessly coalesce traditional Native American craftsmanship with contemporary culture, forming works that speak to the experience of an individual subjectivity within the larger narrative of globalization.



Jeffrey Gibson *IN SUCH TIMES CLOWNS BECOME WITNESSES*, 2017  
Glass beads, artificial sinew, metal studs, acrylic felt, over wood panel, 40 x 30 in (101.6 x 76.2 cm)

Forthcoming solo exhibitions include a traveling mid-career survey originating at The Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO (March 2018) and an installation based exhibition of new work at The Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art, Clinton, NY (September 2018). Recent solo exhibitions include The Haggerty Museum in Milwaukee (2017), Oklahoma Contemporary in Oklahoma City (2017), The Savannah College of Art Design Museum (2016), The National Academy Museum in New York (2013), The Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston (2013), and the Cornell Museum of Fine Art (2013).

Gibson is represented in the permanent collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the National Museum of The American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; the National Gallery of Canada; the Nasher Museum, North Carolina; the Nerman Museum, Kansas; the Newark Museum of Art, New Jersey; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Arkansas; Hood Museum, Dartmouth College, New Hampshire; and the Denver Art Museum.

Gibson is currently a Visiting Artist at Bard College, New York. He lives and works in Hudson, New York.

For additional information, please contact Marc Arranaga: 323.549.0223 and [marc@robertsandtilton.com](mailto:marc@robertsandtilton.com)  
Gallery hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 11:00am – 6:00pm.  
Roberts & Tilton is located between Fairfax Avenue and La Cienega Boulevard.  
Parking is available on the street and at Dunn Edwards located 1/2 block east of the gallery.