

Press Release

Glenn Ligon. late at night, early in the morning, at noon

15 January – 11 April 2026

Hauser & Wirth New York, 18th Street



Hauser & Wirth is pleased to present 'Late at night, early in the morning, at noon,' a two-part exhibition of new and historic works on paper by Glenn Ligon. This presentation extends the artist's longstanding engagement with language and abstraction through a series of richly layered compositions that meditate on the color blue and its emotional, historical and cultural inflections. In dialogue with the writings of James Baldwin, Ligon's latest work here traverses the space between legibility and sensation, where text dissolves into atmosphere and meaning into light.

The exhibition's title is taken from Baldwin's 1964 introduction to a Beauford Delaney exhibition in Paris and recalls the writer's reflection on a window through which 'everything one saw... was filtered through leaves.' Ligon draws upon Baldwin's description of light 'as blue as the blues when the last light of sun departed,' to consider how color and language can merge to create a kind of figuration. In these new works, blue operates as more than a color; it conveys mood, time and emotion. It evokes the twilight hour between visibility and darkness; it conjures the emotional register of Blues music. For Ligon, as for Baldwin, light becomes a metaphor for perception itself, a means of reckoning with history, intimacy and the power of art to reveal quieter truths.

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In the front gallery at 18th Street, Ligon presents 'Blue (for JB),' a new series of large-scale works on paper that build on ideas first explored in his Stranger paintings, text-based works drawn from Baldwin's 1953 essay 'Stranger in the Village.' For this new body of work, Ligon begins with rubbings made on thin sheets of Japanese Kozo paper placed atop studies he made for his Stranger paintings. This process leaves behind traces of word fragments and shapes that record the convergence of image and text. Ligon then enlarges these rubbings as silkscreens on blue grounds and applies water to the surfaces, allowing the ink to flow and blur across the paper. The resulting works oscillate between legibility and abstraction, transforming Baldwin's words into something atmospheric and enveloping.

The second gallery features prints made over the past three decades, charting the development of Ligon's printmaking practice from the early 1990s to today. Among the works on view are 'Untitled (Four Etchings)' (1992), a suite of four prints using text from prominent Black authors Zora Neale Hurston and Ralph Ellison; 'Self-Portrait at Nine Years Old' (2008), from a series where Ligon used images of his childhood music idols, like Stevie Wonder and James Brown, to represent himself through techniques like pulp painting and screen printing; and 'Untitled (Condition Report for Black Rage)' (2015), a silkscreen and digital print featuring a marked-up image of the cover of the seminal 1968 book 'Black Rage.' Taken together with the new works in the front gallery, this presentation underscores the breadth of Ligon's engagement with different media and reveals how, across decades, he has used printmaking to test the limits of language and representation.

Public Programming

This February, the gallery will present '[Take This Hammer](#),' a series of film screenings on the legendary novelist and activist James Baldwin, personally selected by Glenn Ligon, at our 18th Street location.

About the artist

Glenn Ligon (b. 1960) is an artist living and working in New York. Throughout his career, Ligon has pursued an incisive exploration of American history, literature and society across bodies of work that build critically on the legacies of modern painting and conceptual art. He earned his BA from Wesleyan University (1982) and attended the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program (1985). In 2011, the Whitney Museum of American Art held a mid-career retrospective, 'Glenn Ligon: AMERICA,' organized by Scott Rothkopf, that traveled nationally. Important solo exhibitions include 'Glenn Ligon: Break It Down,' Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO (2025); 'All Over the Place,' The Fitzwilliam Museum at the University of Cambridge, England (2024) 'Post-Noir,' Carre d'Art, Nîmes (2022); and 'Glenn Ligon – Some Changes,' The Power Plant Center for Contemporary Art, Toronto, Canada, which traveled internationally (2005). Select curatorial projects include 'Grief and Grievance,' New Museum, New York NY (2021); 'Blue Black,' Pulitzer Arts Foundation, St. Louis MO (2017); and 'Glenn Ligon: Encounters and Collisions,' Nottingham Contemporary and Tate Liverpool, UK (2015). Ligon's work has been shown in major international exhibitions, including the Venice Biennale (2015, 1997), Berlin Biennial (2014), Istanbul Biennial (2019, 2011) and Documenta XI (2002).

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Glenn Ligon

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Photo: Ron Amsutz

Blue (for JB) #10

Carbon ink and acrylic on torinoko paper

198.1 x 142.2 cm / 78 x 56 in

Blue (for JB) #14

Carbon ink and acrylic on torinoko paper

198.1 x 142.2 cm / 78 x 56 in