

Lonnie Holley: Coming Through the Doors

5 June – 3 July 2026



Every face in these paintings...they're all the people—especially women—that have supported me.

– Lonnie Holley

Edel Assanti presents an exhibition of three paintings on quilt by Lonnie Holley, inaugurating our new St James's gallery, coinciding with the artist's *Inserzioni* commission at Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy.

The group of works combine Holley's compositional painting technique with his sculptural practice of using found materials to voice embedded everyday histories. Whilst Holley, alongside Thornton Dial, is understood as a principal conduit of the Yard Art show of the American South to mainstream art discourse, quilt-making is an equally significant, parallel art tradition endemic to Black artists of the Southern states. Recognising Holley and Dial's close friendships with the Gee's Bend Quiltmakers from the 1990s onwards, Holley's gesture of painting on quilts is both a tribute and statement about the interconnected nature of these mediums of artistic expressions.

Dating from 2020-21, these paintings were produced during a residency at the Elaine de Kooning House, and are among the first works in which Holley developed his unique technique of layering spray-paint over gestural underpainting. Purples, ochres, and deep reds hover in the background, as spectral wisps of stars and stripes weave through compositions, contemplating how so many destinies are bound together under symbols of fluctuating beliefs and identities. Holley's kaleidoscopic compositions of interlocking facial profiles pay homage to ancestral memories of both known and unsung heroes who preceded him: those who established the cultural framework that facilitated his own artistic expression, as well as those who sustain the ongoing, multigenerational struggle for social justice.

ABOUT LONNIE HOLLEY

Lonnie Holley (b. 1950, Birmingham, Alabama) has made art since 1979, devoted to a practice spanning painting, sculpture, filmmaking, and music. The exhibition coincides with Holley's new commission at Castello di Rivoli (Italy, 2026) and anticipates the presentation of his film installation *I Snuck Off the Slave Ship* (2019) at the Stedelijk Museum (NL, 2026). His acclaimed recent solo exhibition, *All Rendered Truth*, was presented at Camden Art Centre (UK, 2024), alongside group exhibitions at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art (both USA, 2025). In 2024, Holley was recipient of Lifetime Achievement Awards from the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture and the American Folk Art Museum (both USA). Recent acquisitions of major works include the Stedelijk Museum (NL), Centre National des Arts Plastiques (FR) and Norton Museum of Art (USA), among other leading institutions. In 2025, Rizzoli published a career-spanning monograph, coinciding with the release of Holley's critically acclaimed fifth studio album, *Tonky*.

ABOUT EDEL ASSANTI

Edel Assanti was founded in 2010 in London by Jeremy Epstein and Charlie Fellowes. The gallery programme focuses on narrative-driven work by international contemporary artists whose practices engage with the complex realities of the moment in which they live.

Having been located in London's Fitzrovia since 2014, in 2022 the gallery opened its 4,000 square foot flagship space in a renovated Grade II listed building on Little Titchfield Street. In May 2026, Edel Assanti opens a second London location at 11 Bury Street, St James's, in the heart of one of the city's most historic gallery neighbourhoods, broadening the scope of programming for its artists and their multifaceted practices. The Little Titchfield Street gallery stages four to five ambitious solo exhibitions per year – tending towards interdisciplinary, research-led work – with biannual expansive group exhibitions providing a platform to bring together non-represented artists in explorations of emerging themes of artistic interest. Bury Street offers an intimate, salon-style environment for focused presentations by both represented artists and those new to the programme, highlighting individual works, significant periods and definitive themes.

Our premises play host to a dynamic events programme in parallel to gallery exhibitions, encompassing performance, talks and live music. The gallery's digital presence includes a series of short films and artist interviews published to accompany exhibitions.

In 2021, Edel Assanti's Jeremy Epstein founded London Gallery Weekend (LGW), an annual celebration of London's diverse gallery community, bringing together 130 contemporary commercial galleries. Now in its sixth year, Epstein remains at LGW's helm.

CONTACT US

For further press information and high-res images, please contact: athena@edelassanti.com.

IMAGE

Lonnie Holley, *When We Were Together*, 2022. Acrylic, gesso, spray paint, and oil on stick on quilted fabric over wood panel. 122.6 x 122.6 x 5.1 cm, 48 1/4 x 48 1/4 x 2 in. © Lonnie Holley. Courtesy the artist and Edel Assanti.