

PRESS RELEASE

Kingsley Ifill

Blue Roan

27 March - 17 May 2025

*For to know nothing is nothing, not to want to know anything likewise,
but to be beyond knowing anything, to know you are beyond knowing anything,
that is when peace enters in, to the soul of the incurious seeker.*

- Samuel Beckett from *Molloy* (1951)

Blue Roan is the first solo exhibition by Kingsley Ifill at Hannah Barry Gallery and the artist's first solo show of photography in the UK. The 18 works that make up the exhibition have been selected from some 15 years of Ifill's multidisciplinary practice - startling images of horses, nudes, snakes, birds, sleeping, running, riding, boxing - presented as a series of eight large-scale paintings on linen and canvas where images are screen-printed directly in acrylic onto the material's raw surface; and nine platinum palladium works printed on handmade Japanese Washi paper, each in its own wooden frame carved with intricate patterns in low relief on a solid background.

The two types of work are presented separately across the exhibition spaces at the gallery, connected by a single small screenprint *The Mirror*, an unsettling image of a pit of rattlesnakes in Texas, used as a rhythmic, non-linear pivot between the two zones of visual syntax. The title of the show *Blue Roan* is Romany slang, an expression passed down from his maternal grandfather. 'Blue Roan' can describe a combination of two separate parts, together as one or as Ifill puts it: "Non place as place. A name for the nameless. Neither here, nor there, but somewhere". The exhibition as a whole is Ifill's celebration of the photograph in its own right, but also his consideration how far he might push a photograph as an object.

At the core of Ifill's practice is photography; a medium that - despite the complications of the medium in our contemporary moment - still offers him a form of proof, certainty, record-keeping. He works mainly in 35mm, originating in a disposable supermarket camera he discovered as a teenager: "Just about affordable and not much more to develop... I can remember it feeling like a light had been switched on the first time I got a roll developed and kept one of these small cameras with me at all times, snapping away at whatever life flew by. Nothing in particular."

Ifill's subjects, and the places in which he makes his work are impossible to pin down, classify or gather together in a linear way, although his images always capture and contain decisive moments, giving much of his work a diaristic quality; they seem to ask us to see more, feel more, learn more. *Blue Roan* could be seen as a collection of Ifill's one-word stories. The titles of the individual works act simply as signposts to singular images that are visual proof that not everything that can be shown can be said, and that in the world of images the busy world of words is hushed and must find pause.

***Blue Roan* Book Launch**

Saturday 17 May 2025, 2-4pm

with Tarmac Press, coinciding with Offprint London and Photo London.

In collaboration with Ifill's own independent artist run publishing project Tarmac Press, we are pleased to present a specially made short run publication centred on the exhibition.

KINGSLEY IFILL

b. 1988, Kent, UK. Lives and works in Herne Bay, Kent, UK.

Kingsley Ifill has a multidisciplinary practice, predominantly focused on process-based photography and incorporating painting, printmaking, artist books and sculpture. Ifill's images are immediate and arresting, known for compositional austerity and analogue textures. He carries out all aspects of the creative process by hand, from developing film to printing and bookmaking. Using a combination of reproduction techniques including screen printing, photocopying, printing and assemblage, his photography is used to create large-scale mixed-media canvases. Bookmaking is a significant part of Ifill's practice – many of which he makes by hand in small editions in his studio. Ifill also is known for his portraiture, most recently photographing Skepta, Emma d'Arcy and Cillian Murphy. His work has been published in *AnOther Magazine*, *The Face Magazine*, *D Republica*, *Pop Magazine* and he regularly contributes to *Arena Homme +*. He has also shot special projects commissioned by Vivienne Westwood (2024) and Rick Owens (2023).