

Hill Art Foundation

Press Release for Igshaan Adams: *I've been here all along, I've been waiting*

7/16/25

The Hill Art Foundation is excited to announce Igshaan Adams: *I've been here all along, I've been waiting*, opening September 16, 2025, with accompanying text by Siddhartha Mitter and booklet designed by Pacific. This solo exhibition brings together work from over 15 years of Adams' oeuvre, illustrating his prolonged commitment to serving and engaging his community as a form of artistic and spiritual expression. The exhibition will be on display through December 20, 2025.

Throughout *I've been here all along, I've been waiting*, Adams' journey of spiritual discovery is on view, prompted by continuous individual reflection and community engagement. For the first time in a public exhibition, the rose is a central and recurring motif, marking over a decade of exploration. For Adams, the rose represents inherent contradictions: beauty and pain, ephemerality and rootedness, depth and surface. He traces the symbolism back to his mentor and Sufi master, Ma Rukea, who guided a young Adams as he grappled with his religious and personal upbringing. Ma Rukea referenced the rose as a metaphoric veil—its physical beauty acts as a façade for a hidden grace that remains unseen. The true essence of the rose is waiting to be uncovered, experienced, and known—lessons that have informed Adams' spiritual and artistic development as he seeks to, in his words, "serve God through people." Within the exhibition, heavily embellished floor- and wall-mounted rose tapestries are accompanied by intimate preparatory drawings, which transport the viewer into a mode of study, observation, and reflection.

*I've been here all along, I've been waiting* explores the sacred relationship between the collective and the self. Adams employs a team of over fifteen local weavers, embroiderers, and technicians, including family members, to collaborate in the creation of his intricate weavings and sculptural works. Growing up in a Muslim-Christian household in the segregated suburb of Bonteheuwel in apartheid-era South Africa, Adams is attuned to the divisions between local communities and the resilience of marginalized groups. Works such as *Onder Die Voorkamer Lig (beneath the living room lights)* (2022) and *Hoek Onder Die Trappe (corner beneath the staircase)* (2022) interrogate this history and celebrate Adams' community in their moments of quiet contemplation. Both works consider what worn areas in linoleum flooring, a material associated with working-class homes, can reveal about the rhythms of domestic life in the face of hardship. Each work is based on a specific patch of ground from a friend or neighbor's home, tracking the daily movements of families and the stored memories embedded in the material—acts that reflect a personal spiritual practice within their ordinary routine. As a form of communal exchange, Adams and the residents excavate the flooring, while the artist provides new linoleum as a replacement. The resulting tapestry elevates the memory of the recycled floor, suffusing the mundane with profound beauty, and offering an intimate glimpse into sacred, personal spaces.

Mapping the imprint of bodies in ritual plays a similarly key role in Adams' *Salat Aljamaeat Min Bonteheuvel* works. As part of another longstanding artistic practice, Adams collects prayer rugs that have been used for decades within his community, and translates the markings of individual movement into weavings. Adams has compared the act of weaving to praying as he outlines the flow of daily life. This further resonates in works as early as his 2013 installation, *69*, which features two Islamic prayer rugs and a hanging string curtain. Through these various iterations of prayer rugs, the artist brings forth a deeply personal ritual to the shared space of the Foundation, tracing the connection between the spiritual and the embodied through the act of prayer.

In organizing *I've been here all along, I've been waiting*, Adams has taken full advantage of the Foundation's double-height space and interstitial areas. The exhibition incorporates over 20 works, ranging from hanging tapestries, to free-standing sculpture, to ephemeral masses that evoke clouds of dust suspended from the ceiling. These dynamic flurries of wire, beads, and found objects punctuate the vertical space of the Hill Art Foundation, creating a landscape populated with irregular forms that both obscure and bear witness to the community shaped by the artist and the viewer.