

*The Queen of Spades... and other stories*

January 13 - February 26, 2022

*The Queen of Spades*

First published in 1833, Alexander Pushkin's enigmatic *The Queen of Spades* is one of the major classics of Russian literature. It has been the inspiration of operas, films and exhaustive critical study. Less known, and sometimes intentionally obscured, is the history of Pushkin's African ancestry. Abram Petrovich Gannibal, Pushkin's maternal great grandfather, rose out of slavery to become a general in Tsar Peter the Great's armies.

Commissioned by Eminence Grise Editions, three outstanding artists, Derrick Adams, Outtara Watts and Fred Wilson have entered personal responses into the dialogue generated by their fascination with Pushkin and the story. Derrick Adams' works pay tribute to the two female characters, Countess N and her lady in waiting. In Fred Wilson's suite of three images the black spade emerges to overwhelm and obscure depictions of a courtly lady and gentleman. Echoing Fyodor Dostoevsky's statement that Pushkin's tale represents "the pinnacle of the art of the fantastic," Ouattara Watts has created two hallucinatory visions.

*And other stories*

Also included in the exhibition are recent Eminence Grise editions that hint at narratives that are never made fully explicit. Deborah Brown's *Death Maiden*, depicting a naked canoeist and her dog paddling on a lake in a forbidding forest, evokes a haunted journey. Editioned in aquatint and chine-collé, each color variant engenders a chromatic series of emotional responses. Using a recently invented digital technology, Daniella Dooling's assemblages of abandoned surgical masks poses questions about the fate of both the individuals who once wore them and about the anxieties of our pandemic dominated culture. Sara Jimenez's monumental *Radiating from a dark cloud...*, is a montage of various photographs from American colonial texts about the Philippines, inspired by staged portraits by American and European photographers of the Filipinx population during the early 1900s.