

# **Julia Gutman**

## **life in the third person**

### **Artwork Labels**

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### **life in the third person**

*life in the third person* is not a self-portrait. It is masquerading as one. Julia Gutman's face and body appear everywhere in the textile work, populating its woven tableaux. Here, two figures sit in a state of intimacy and dislocation—facing opposite directions, while simultaneously resting against one another. They are together and yet apart. Just beyond them, a group throws a limp form of another figure into the air. And further on, to the right, a pair of figures are entangled in a violent scene, with the blade of a sword pressing down on an overpowered body, which lies below. Gutman's image is in every one of the scenes, yet because of this repetition the individual person also ceases to really be in any of them. The monumental textile is not a retreat into narcissism, but a push to understand the limits of our own image.

The repeated image of the artist is, in a way, a proxy for all of us. It stands in for our urge to be understood, the impossibility of encapsulating the complexities of our own experience, and the inadequacy of our public projections. Most challengingly, the multiplied selves of Gutman's work suggest the inevitable warping of our image that occurs as it moves through the world, becomes unmoored from us, and is moulded by the hands of others. "Someone writes a memoir at 22 and then they're 50 and they still have to speak to whatever they were," Gutman explains. "The irony is that the more that you try to explain who you are to people the more likely you are to flatten yourself and lose your capacity to change or be complicated."

# **Julia Gutman**

born in 1993 Gadigal Land/Sydney, New South Wales  
works on Gadigal Land/Sydney, New South Wales

## **life in the third person**

2024

woven textile

Courtesy of the artist and Sullivan + Strumpf, Sydney

## Julia Gutman

Julia Gutman was born in 1993 on Gadigal Land/Sydney, New South Wales, where she currently lives and works.

She undertook a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Painting) at the University of New South Wales, graduating in 2015. In 2018, Gutman graduated with a Masters Degree (Sculpture) from the prestigious Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, United States of America. Her solo exhibitions include *Muses* (Sullivan + Strumpf, Sydney, 2022), *Everyone You Are Looking At is Also You* (Sullivan + Strumpf, 2024) and *Lighting of the Sails: Echo*, a major animated work projected over the Sydney Opera House as part of *Vivid Sydney* in 2024.

Gutman's work has been included in numerous group exhibitions including *Twist and Twine* (Paradise Palase, New York, USA, 2019); *Intimacy* (Jerico Contemporary, Sydney, 2020); *Ramsay Art Prize* (Art Gallery of South Australia, 2021); *All Great and Precious Things* (T293 Gallery, Rome, Italy, 2021); *Fresh Material: New Australian Textile Art* (Perc Tucker Regional Gallery, Queensland, 2021); *Primavera 2022: Young Australian Artists* (Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2022); and *Shipping Address* (Palazzo Monti, Italy, 2023).

In May 2023 at the age of 29, Gutman was awarded the highly venerable *Archibald Prize*, staged at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, for a textile portrait of her friend, the pop singer Montaigne (aka Jess Cerro), *Head in the sky, feet on the ground*.