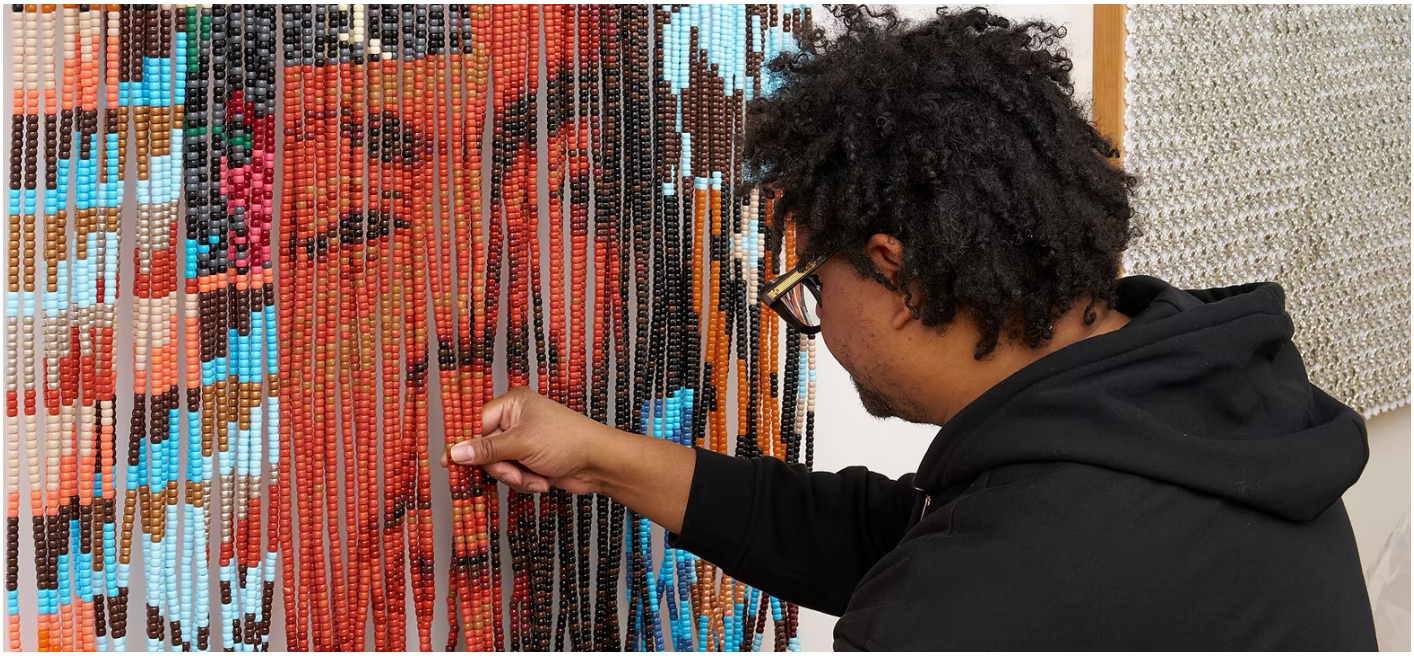
Kavi Gupta

FELANDUS THAMES



Felandus Thames b. 1974; carefully assembles a beaded work in his studio, bringing together color, texture, and intricate detail through his meticulous process. Photo courtesy of the Artist.

November 12, 2026

Kavi Gupta proudly announces the representation of artist Felandus Thames, alongside his forthcoming inaugural solo exhibition with the gallery, opening in April 2027 at Kavi Gupta, Chicago.

Felandus Thames compresses the memory and collective mythology of vernacular objects into distinct arrangements of language, contemporary reference, and popular imagery, using them as reminders of Afrocentric history and allegory. Through sculpture, assemblage, and installation, Thames compiles vestiges of the joys, anxieties, and quick wit of everyday life into monuments to inherited memory, whose sums are greater than their essential parts.

Thames investigates materials through fixated repetition, pushing the common object beyond its minutiae and into popular resonance. Clicks of plastic hair beads, undulating waves of basketball hoops, and the sharp prickle and drag of boar-bristle brushes carry a sensorial record of tender gestures and the exchange of skin contact that shapes Black American adolescence. His works consider the meanings by which materials are endowed over time, becoming repositories of memory, personal experience, and collective narratives. Working through processes of accumulation, repetition, and transformation, Thames allows his materials to become active participants in intuited and conditioned epistemologies shared between maker and viewer.

In his ongoing series of beaded portraits, Thames strings thousands of plastic hair beads into large-scale suspended compositions that exist between portraiture and abstraction. Breaking the collaged pictorials into their functional units, beads are treated as “Black pixels,” individual particles of composite image and cultural memory. The works draw attention to the expressive possibilities of everyday materials, revealing how objects connected to personal experience can also hold broader collective significance. Across his practice, Thames investigates the balance between beauty, complexity, and lived experience, creating what he describes as “vessels able to contain beauty and trauma at an equilibrium.” His works function similarly to the Black music traditions that they often reference, along breaks and measures that articulate, distort, and reassemble the historical and the surreal.

Thames's work has been exhibited at major institutions nationally and internationally, including The Afro-Futurist Manifesto: Blackness Reimagined at the Venice Biennale International Art Exhibition, Palazzo Bembo, Venice, Italy (2022); The Dirty South: Contemporary Art, Material Culture, and the Sonic Impulse, curated by Valerie Cassel Oliver, at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Contemporary Art Museum, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, and Museum of Contemporary Art Denver (2021–2023); and Get in the Game at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and Pérez Art Museum Miami (2024–2026). His work has also been presented at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Museum of the African Diaspora in San Francisco, Reginald F. Lewis Museum, MOCA Westport, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, International Print Center NYC, and Mystic Seaport Museum, among others. Thames's artistic homage to Richard Pryor makes its debut in PRYOR, commissioned by the Peoria Riverfront Museum for its landmark exhibition celebrating the life and legacy of the pioneering comedian, on view through January 29, 2027.

His work is held in numerous public and esteemed private collections, including the Studio Museum in Harlem and the Mississippi Museum of Art. In 2025, Thames was awarded the Louis Comfort Tiffany Prize. His forthcoming exhibition will mark the first solo presentation of his work at Kavi Gupta and introduce a new chapter in the artist's relationship with the gallery.



Installation view: Get in the Game, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; 2026. Felandus Thames; You talking bout practice, 2024; Hair-beads on coated wire with aluminum rod; 143 1/2 x 96 x 4 in; (364.49 x 243.84 x 10.16 cm)