PearlLam
Projects

Shanghai

SECOND SKIN: Kesewa Aboah and Oluwasemilore Delano

Vernissage	Monday, 9 November, 2026, 3–5pm
Exhibition dates	9 November, 2026–20 February, 2027 | Monday–Saturday, 10:30am–6:30pm
Venue	Pearl Lam Projects, 203, 2/F, 117 Xianggang Road, Shanghai, China





L: KESEWA ABOAH b. 1994, **Silver Scissors, Series (3)**, 2026, Magnesium letterpress plate, enamel paint, tulipwood frame, 48 x 38 cm (18 7/8 x 15 in.)
R: OLUWASEMILORE DELANO b. 1998, **Untitled Rear End 04**, 2026, Oil paint on plywood, steel nails, 190 x 122 cm (74 3/4 x 48 in.)
Images courtesy of the artists and Pearl Lam Projects

Shanghai—The duo show *Second Skin* brings together Kesewa Aboah and Oluwasemilore Delano, whose distinctive artistic practices explore how the body leaves its mark on another material, creating painted, imprinted, or indented surfaces that evoke intimacy and the sensation of flesh. Rather than approaching the idea of a "second skin" as a protective shield, the exhibition considers the traces of skin on another surface and how proximity and distance shape their varying levels of intimacy. This inquiry extends to the similarities and differences between human and animal bodies, investigating how these intersections might blur the boundaries we have established between them.

Kesewa Aboah presents embroideries that surround the imprint of a woman's body, alongside new metal works featuring collages of isolated body parts and brass-cast flowers. Through isolation, scale, and perspective, the body assumes atypical forms across both artists' works. Meanwhile, Oluwasemilore Delano presents a series of oil paintings on wood and watercolours on paper that depict both singular cows and herds, first observed on a trip to Northern Nigeria.

The trace of human skin in Aboah's work, recorded in ink or metal, acts as a document of the ever-changing human body at the precise moment of its impression on the paper. Her largest embroidery to date, *S.K- 31.10.24*, featured in *Second Skin*, is a composition in which the same woman's body is documented in multiple positions across the paper. The figure appears both moving and static, splayed and constrained, her actions leaving their imprint on the surface. Her impressions are surrounded by meticulously embroidered scarlet thread, accented with silver-plated thread. The stitches, arranged in short, multiplied lines that form subtle patterns, reveal a surface that, upon closer inspection, evokes the hide or skin of an animal.

Aboah's embroideries draw on the visual language of Asafo flags, traditionally made by the Fante people of Ghana. Varying in colour and meaning, the embroidered flags typically depict two-dimensional figures, animals and people, in vividly coloured environments. Associated with proverbs, the flags have historically served as markers of communal identity and allegiance, as well as expressions of collective strength and protection.

Skin, the body's fragile armour, is the vulnerable surface through which we face the world. This notion of the body as a protective shield extends to Aboah's metal works. Notably, in *Private Devotion*, pressed forget-me-not flowers have been cast in brass, granting their inherent fragility and ephemerality a more enduring form. The metal takes the shape of the flower, fortifying its delicate nature with resilient physical properties.

In Aboah's works, skin acts as a tool to narrate the artist's lived experiences, carrying traces of what the body has encountered. Her metal plates bring together disparate parts of the body, assembling fingerprints or ears into collaged compositions, alongside impressions of the face, which does not appear in her embroideries.

There is a tension between skin as a surface through which we present ourselves to others and as a physical container for our feelings and experiences. This relationship between skin and memory emerges, for instance, in Aboah's work *Silver Scissors*, the title drawn from a hair salon that the artist visited at a particular moment in her life. Although the work depicts the impression of a back and braided hair, it also functions as a record of a specific time and place, with seemingly ordinary physical details carrying the weight of a personal memory.

Delano's paintings may initially read as abstraction due to her selective use of cropping and scale, but prolonged looking reveals the distinct anatomy of an animal body. "Is the sky skin?" served as the foundational question for this ongoing series of cow paintings. In *Second Skin*, Delano contemplates scale and proximity in relation to her subjects, asking: "At what distance and scale do we consider skin?" She examines how the intimacy of close-looking versus the totality of observing from a distance alters our relationship to, and recognition of, a body. This dynamic is particularly evident in her untitled *Torso* and *Rear End* series, where the tight cropping prevents the viewer from observing the animal's body as a whole, retaining just enough information for a ribcage or cow's silhouette to emerge.

In Delano's *Rear End* paintings, this perspective draws attention to an animal's anatomical region that is typically perceived as grotesque. Yet, when viewed from this angle, the form evokes an unexpectedly familiar, human-like presence. Striking parallels emerge between the shoulders, hips and spine of the cow and those of a human being bending forward in the aptly named Cow Pose (*Bitilasana*) in yoga. This posture, which might evoke vulnerability for a human, constitutes the natural form of the cow. Such an alignment invites a profound reconsideration of how vulnerability is perceived across species.

In her oil paintings, Delano employs a striking repetition of subjects: two ribs, two heads, three herds, and three rear ends. Her untitled series positions gatherings of cows in the upper segments of the compositions, contrasted by fields of colour beneath them. These blocks of colour, through which the wood grain can be seen, introduce a greater sense of distance between the viewer and the animals than

in the other paintings, interrupting the intimacy that the closely cropped ribs, heads, and backsides evoke. The distinction between the individual animal and the herd is also significant; the isolated body invites closer scrutiny, while the gathering of animals produces a different kind of visual encounter, in which individual forms merge into a collective.

Ultimately, *Second Skin* juxtaposes two distinct practices that consider the body as both a physical form and a surface marked by lived experience. Through their differing materials and conceptual approaches, the pairing of Aboah's and Delano's works invites reflection on how the body can be imprinted, cropped, fragmented and abstracted, revealing unexpected points of connection between skin, memory, and the materials that bear their traces.

About Kesewa Aboah

Kesewa Aboah (b. 1994, London, UK) is a Ghanaian-English artist living and working in London. Her practice uses the body and its impressions as the backbone of her work. Aboah explores representation through materials. Acts of intimacy, whether sewn, pressed, or etched, become lasting gestures of memory, marking the tension between vulnerability and permanence.

Aboah holds a degree in Fine Arts from the School of Visual Arts in New York City. Solo presentations include *There Is Life in This Nakedness* (2024), 12.26 Gallery, Dallas, USA; *A Lightness* (2023), Incubator Gallery, London, UK; and a solo presentation with Gallery 12.26 at The Armory Show 2022, New York, USA.

About Oluwasemilore Delano

Oluwasemilore Delano (b. 1998, Nigeria) is an artist working between Lagos and London.

Delano received a BA (Hons) in Architecture at Cambridge University (2020), where she received the Provost's Prize for her artistic contributions and made history as the first student to be exhibited at Kettle's Yard Gallery, Cambridge. In 2024, she went on to complete her MFA at the Ruskin School of Art, University of Oxford, where she was awarded the Black Academic Futures Scholarship and the Penny Freer Scholarship from Lady Margaret Hall. Her recent solo exhibitions and presentations include *the life of a few*, a solo presentation with Adegbola Gallery at The Armory Show in New York in September 2026; *between slumped shoulders held the moon in waiting* (2026), TAFETA, London, UK; and *the back of the sky* (2025), Fleet House, London, UK. Notable group shows include *Efuru and the Woman of the Lake* (2026), Adegbola Gallery, Lagos, Nigeria; *End of Year Party* (2025), Red Door Gallery, Lagos, Nigeria; *Tide Below* (2024), Breakers Gallery, London, UK; *Not only, but also* (2020), Betts Project, London, UK; and *The Cambridge Show* (2018), Kettle's Yard Gallery, Cambridge, UK.

Her work was collected by the Royal Drawing School as a record of her studies. A celebrated emerging artist, she won the LUX Magazine and Bicester Village Next Generation Award in 2024, as well as the ORB Summer 2024 Art Prize, sponsored by Sotheby's. That same year, Delano was shortlisted for the Royal Society of British Artists Rising Star Award. Most recently, in June 2026, she concluded a residency at the G.A.S. Foundation, founded by Yinka Shonibare CBE.

About Pearl Lam Projects

Pearl Lam Projects is an international programme of off-site exhibitions and artistic collaborations. Building on the gallery's permanent space in Shanghai, the programme operates across numerous cities, including Hong Kong, enabling the gallery to present work by and expand opportunities for its diverse roster of international artists beyond its year-round gallery programme.

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