

# DAVID DATUNA UNITY - FASHION - FAME

## The Portraits, Flags & Icons

Alon Zakaim Fine Art, 5-7 Dover St. London W1S 4LD  
21 September – 28 September 2016  
Film screening and reception: 22 September, 6.30pm

Alon Zakaim Fine Art is proud to present *Unity - Fashion - Fame*, an exclusive one-week exhibition dedicated to the Portraits, Flags & Icons of celebrated Georgian-born American artist David Datuna. Described by the Miami Herald as 'mind and eye twisting', the exhibition will feature a selection of works from Datuna's signature series *Viewpoint of Millions*. The sculptures will also form the backdrop for a private screening of the award-winning film *Datuna: Portrait of America*.

Before becoming an artist, David Datuna worked in an eyeglass store and his previous career had a profound influence on the artworks that followed. He notes that learning to fit glasses onto people had a lot of similarities with making art, and each day he saw how people viewed the same objects through a variety of different frames and lenses. In a way, he could affect the way people viewed the world. Taking this idea forward into his artworks, works from the *Viewpoint of Millions* series are formed by laying a network of hundreds of optical lenses over large-scale layered, collaged and painted images.

Beginning with collaged photographs, magazine and newspaper clippings and painted areas that together form instantly recognisable images such as the American or British flags, portraits of stars including Marilyn Monroe and Audrey Hepburn, or logos of luxury brands, the artist then overlays them with a cascading veil of eyeglasses, creating stunning optical effects. The prismatic surface of both negative and positive lenses simultaneously distorts and clarifies the work below. Viewed from afar, the sculptures have a kaleidoscopic effect, with the images below unified as one. Only when seen from up close can the viewer decipher the social, political and cultural headlines on the newspaper clippings or the imagery of icons from pop culture and experience them in a very personal way. Just as Datuna felt with his customers back in the eyeglass store, the lenses create "the admissibility of the different points of view and attitudes towards the same image." He states: "The lenses symbolically express individual identity, illusion, perception, fragmentation, and unification... The network of positive and negative lenses expresses the multiple points of view we all share from within."

David Datuna's mixed media sculptures have received much critical acclaim internationally for over a decade. Paying homage to Jasper Johns and the tradition of collage, the artist combines elements of pop and conceptual art to produce a fascinating body of work that infuses timeless images with new meanings. With exhibitions throughout the US, in Paris, Russia and Ukraine, Datuna's works form part of important private collections worldwide.

*Datuna: Portrait of America* is a feature length documentary film directed by Brian Bayerl and produced by Michael Huter that follows the fascinating story of David Datuna as he dreams of becoming an artist whilst a child in his native Georgia, to having one of his major pieces seen by 27,000 visitors over a three day period at the prestigious Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, Washington in 2014. The film traces Datuna's artistic successes as he becomes the first artist worldwide to use wearable technology in a contemporary artwork, yet highlights the personal challenges he faced such as being an aspiring immigrant escaping oppression and a battle against cancer. Premiered in Europe at the 2015 Raindance Film Festival in London, the documentary won the festival's most esteemed award, 'Best Feature Film', and David Datuna has been invited to be on a jury at this year's festival that includes Stephen Fry and Joanna Lumley.

David Datuna lives and works in New York. On his latest project, *Project FreeSpace*, he is currently working with a group of DARPA and NASA veterans to launch a satellite into orbit in 2018 that will communicate with his artwork on Earth, through the work of other artists. Artists of all ages from around the world will be able to upload their work into specially designed Cube-Sat satellite through an app starting in 2017, leading up to the launch. David will create Installations in 10 cities globally, including London, where people can interact directly with his work to upload their artwork into a digital archive. Participants will become part of Datuna's 21st Century time capsule concept using wearable devices, phones, smartwatches, virtual reality and augmented reality devices and more. For more information visit [projectfreespace.com](http://projectfreespace.com).

*David Datuna: Unity - Fashion - Fame* will be on show at Alon Zakaim Fine Art, 5-7 Dover St. London W1S 4LD from 21 September-28 September 2016. Opening hours are 9am-6pm, Monday-Friday; weekends by appointment. *Datuna: Portrait of America* will be screened in the gallery at 6.30pm on 22 September. Places strictly limited.