
Fleisher Ollman

1216 Arch Street – 5A
Philadelphia PA 19107
tel / 215-545-7562
215-545-6140 / fax
fleisherollman.com

Jayson Musson: *The Truth in the Song*

April 1, 2016 – May 28, 2016

Reception: Friday, April 1, 6-8pm

Working in a variety of media including video, painting, textiles, music, and performance, Brooklyn-based artist Jayson Musson returns to Fleisher/Ollman for his first solo exhibition at the gallery in three years. Musson will present a new series of Coogi sweater paintings, exploring the in-between spaces of high art versus craft, intentional versus found abstraction, and, most significantly, the notion of ownership of African-American popular culture. These works are not paintings at all, but recycled Coogi sweaters—wildly-colored knit garments—mounted on stretchers and transformed into pictures.

For Musson, Coogi sweaters are more about African—American nostalgia and cultural memory rather than homage to Notorious B.I.G. or a commercial garment brand. Coogi, long regarded as a status symbol within the African-American Hip-Hop community, has always been a white-owned company, first by Australians and then by Americans, and functions as yet another instance of the white power structure profiting off of the perceived desires of people of color. According to Musson:

This, in effect, operates as a form of colonization over another corner of Black memory, and any reverence these garments received, at least in my opinion, is highly undeserved. I come to the Coogi material as a junk collector of sorts. I consider the sweaters 'cultural detritus'—just another commodity on a long list of objects many people are manipulated into coveting or consuming...ultimately, this work is about a form of existential disconnection, that even as one retreats into memory in order to counteract the trauma of the present, even these memories are occupied by our enemy. Thus, the alienation of the self is continued even further.

Jayson Musson has had solo exhibitions at Salon 94, New York; Fleisher/Ollman, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Marginal Utility, and Space 1026, all in Philadelphia; and Dazed & Confused Magazine Gallery, London. Musson and Alex Da Corte collaborated on an exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, entitled Easternsports, in 2014. Musson has been featured in numerous group exhibitions at venues including Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; Grey Art Gallery, NYU, New York; Galerie Perrotin, Paris, France; Postmasters, New York; Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia; West Galeria, Den Haag, The Netherlands; Grimmuseum, Berlin, Germany; Fleisher/Ollman, Philadelphia; Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago; Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; and Cincinnati Contemporary Art Center, Ohio, among others. Musson received his BFA from the University of the Arts, Philadelphia in 2002 and his MFA from the University of Pennsylvania in 2011. He attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2011.