

Ronald Feldman Fine Arts

For Immediate Release: February 18, 2017

Rico Gatson: *Power Lines* The Armory Show/ Pier 94 - Booth 818 March 2 - 5, 2017

Gatson represents complicated hierarchies in a visual language of pop-bright minimalistic geometric formalism. His emphasis on a radically different mode of perception – where history and the present coincide, his language filled with symbols drawn from history, pop culture, headlines – reveals the veiled workings of race in our contemporary moment.
ARTSLANT October 2, 2011

For its booth at the Armory Show, Ronald Feldman Fine Arts will exhibit paintings, sculptures, works on paper, and videos from 1994 to 2016 by Rico Gatson, a Brooklyn-artist whose work stands at the intersection of formalist abstraction and social commentary. His multi-media works addressing American culture relate to contemporary and historical events, incorporating remembrance and celebration as underlying themes.

The installation presents seminal works including the confrontational sculpture/video, *Two Heads in a Box* (1994) in which the viewer is confronted by the face of the artist, lip synching Al Jolson's "Let Me Sing and I'm Happy" to the point of exhaustion. Video works from 2001, *Jungle Jungle*, *Gun Play*, and *Departure*, transform Hollywood film clips of racial stereotypes from the films *King Kong*, *Foxy Brown* and *Alien* into kaleidoscopic images and pulsating soundtracks. A video from 2013, *The Promise of Light*, represents a journey of transformation as a metaphor for the healing of history from The Great Migration of African Americans living in the South to the North and West.

Works on paper include a series of photcollages from 2007- 2016 that celebrate a spectrum of historical and contemporary well-known African-Americans, including Shirley Chisholm, Angela Davis, Amiri Baraka and President Obama. Each work depicts a small figure radiating beams in black or in color that fill the page, visualizing the energy of the subjects.

Two totemic sculptures, *Throne II* and *Throne III* (2016), each more than six feet tall are color-coded with sociopolitical meaning in red, black, green, and yellow associated with African nationalism and suggest power dynamics, as inspired by the famous portrait of Huey P. Newton seated in a wicker chair with a riffle in one hand and a spear in the other. However, the pieces also allude to absence or loss of honored figures.

The installation also includes 20 new paintings, vertical geometric abstractions that approximate African Plank Masks and Shields and reference the leaning works of John Mccracken. Viewed in the context of the artists oeuvre they become talismanic objects protecting from negative forces.

Rico Gatson received his B.A. from Bethel University and M.F.A. from Yale University. Solo exhibitions at public institutions include Exit Art (New York, NY), and the Essl Museum (Vienna, Austria). His works have been included in group exhibitions at the List Visual Arts Center, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Boston, MA), Studio Museum in Harlem (New York, NY), Tang Teaching Museum (Saratoga Springs, NY), Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía (Madrid, Spain), Prospect.1 New Orleans (New Orleans, LA), Greater New York at MoMA PS 1 (New York, NY), and solo exhibition at the Essl Museum (Vienna, Austria), among other national and international institutions.

Solo exhibitions include at Exit Art (New York, NY), and been included in numerous group exhibitions both nationally and internationally. These include *Prospect 1* in New Orleans, *Greater NY* at MoMA PS 1 in New York (both group), and at the Essl Museum in Austria, Vienna (solo). His work is in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Denver Art Museum and Yale University Art Gallery, among others.

A press kit with more information can be found at: <http://bit.ly/2luDuS9>
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