

NIGHT GALLERY

2276 E. 16th Street, Los Angeles, California 90021

nightgallery.ca

KHARI JOHNSON-RICKS

Feel Me?

March 20 – May 1, 2021

Night Gallery is delighted to present *Feel Me?*, an exhibition of new work by Khari Johnson-Ricks. This will be the artist's first solo presentation at Night Gallery, following his inclusion in 2020's group exhibition *Majeure Force*.

Khari Johnson-Ricks creates intricate, exuberant scenes from paper constructions painted in shellac ink and watercolor. Exploring the illusory potential of paper, the works make use of the medium's graphic flatness to create two forms of depth: one in real space, as cut-out shapes are layered with sculptural dimensionality, and one in the fictive pictorial space conjured from these assemblages. In situ, his tableaux appear like portals to dreamlike realms, while blank passages of paper bring the viewer back into the material plane of the work.

Johnson-Ricks' new work explores fellowship, engaging acts of fiction and poetry to capture moments with kith and kin that feel loving. He asks himself what it means to make a family, community, friendship, when the world is so precarious, when the water rises, when death comes, and when all that is visible is capital. While his older work had been in conversation with vernacular movement traditions and martial arts practices like Shotokan Karate and Jersey Club dancing, which act as covert languages for those most targeted for capital extraction, he now explicitly centers the fantastical and poetic nature of an uninterrupted mundane. The works find their dramatic tension in the context of fragility, addressing his subjects' deep alienation from, and even guilt in the face of, extended moments of peace. In this light, Johnson-Ricks' compositions become testaments to the irrepressible urge of the imagination to metabolize, to reinvent, and to transcend.

Khari Johnson-Ricks (b. 1994) is a multimedia artist whose practice extends across media, including painting, performance, murals, zines, and nightlife spaces. In addition to Night Gallery, his work has been included in group exhibitions at Catinca Tabacaru Gallery, New York; Jeffrey Deitch, Los Angeles; Special Special, New York; and the Elizabeth Foundation, New York, among others. He has created public murals for the city of Newark as part of Mayor Ras Baraka's "Model Neighborhood Initiative" and "Gateways to Newark" Projects. His zines are featured in the library collections of the MET Library, the Whitney Library, and The MOMA Library. He lives and works in New Jersey.