

INMAN GALLERY

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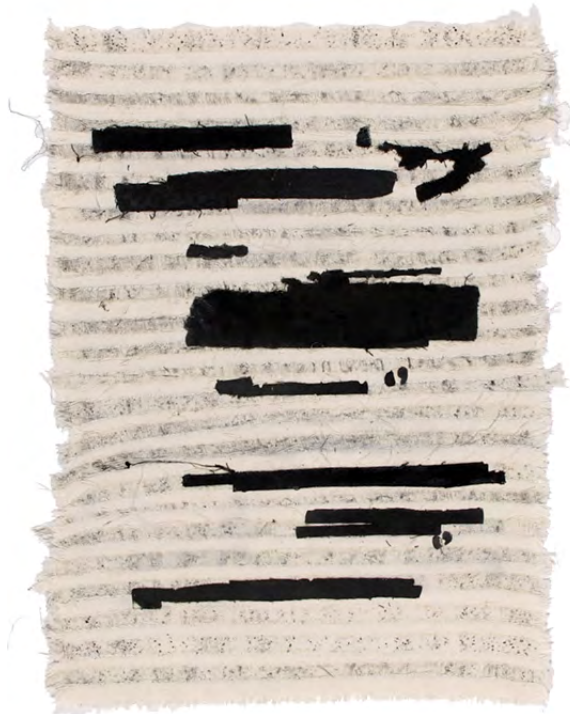
Inman Gallery is pleased to present
the exhibition:

Jamal Cyrus **STANDARDZENBLŪZ**

October 28, 2016 – December 30, 2016

Opening Reception:
Friday, October 28th
6 – 8 pm

Gallery hours:
Wed. – Sat., 11 – 6 and by appointment



Jamal Cyrus, *Untitled (Threads)*, 2016
Wax and ink on canvas, 29 ¾ x 20 inches

Inman Gallery is pleased to present **STANDARDZENBLŪZ**, an exhibition of work by Jamal Cyrus. This will be Cyrus's second show with Inman since 2013. The exhibition will open Friday, October 28th, with a reception from 6:00 to 8:00pm, and will continue through December 30th.

Drawing on the languages of collage and assemblage, as well as the cultural politics embedded within Black American music, Jamal Cyrus's work pursues sculpture as a series of metaphysical encounters. Cyrus is engaged with an aesthetic practice that aims to transform the most mundane materials and objects into rich, densely packed networks of meaning and purpose. For the exhibition **STANDARDZENBLŪZ**, he has taken as his point of departure what he sees as the "transcendental push" within strands of Southern material culture.

The works on view in **STANDARDZENBLŪZ** aspire to the polyvocality of their source material. Embedded in each object are fragments of unsettled political aspirations, discontinued rituals, and anonymous oral traditions. In the work *B.P.P.G.G.*, Cyrus utilizes an iconic black leather jacket, as worn by members of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. At once a statement of fashion and uniform, the black leather jacket and its accompanying beret are tied to images of militancy and style. The symbolism of the jacket, however, is transformed by the artist's use of small hand sewn black leather pouches of varying sizes. Packed tightly with unknown contents, the patches bulge slightly from the taut leather of the jacket in a shiny smooth grid. In various cultures across the African continent as well as in the Caribbean and Southern US, such garments are created to provide protection against various forms of harm, both material and spiritual. Cyrus's choice of such a historically loaded raiment brings together the metaphysics of Black folk culture with the matter and politics of Black resistance struggles.

Also on view is a small selection of works on canvas. New to Cyrus's oeuvre, they have the initial appearance of two-dimensional textiles, yet they are highly sculptural in form. The work *Redacted List_1* combines simple materials—wax and ink on canvas—and maximizes them to evocative effects. In previous work Cyrus mined FBI Counter Intelligence Program files of notable figures from the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements for textural and textual elements to be used in the large scaled drawings. Where the conceptual impetus for the drawings was found in the processes the artist performed to create them, the new works on canvas speak through the artistic traditions they reference. The processes that Cyrus has brought to the production of these fabric works introduces the history of state surveillance and repression to the folk craft of quilting.

Cyrus's work is in dialogue with the present but also the past, and is more clearly understood when considering the sentiments painter Aaron Douglas made to poet Langston Hughes (c. 1925), "...Let's bare our arms and plunge them deep through laughter, through pain, through sorrow, through hope, through disappointment, into the very depths of the souls of our people and drag forth material crude, rough, neglected...Let's create something transcendently material, mystically objective."¹

Jamal Cyrus (born 1973, Houston, TX) received his BFA from the University of Houston in 2004 and his MFA from the University of Pennsylvania in 2008. In 2005 he attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and in 2010 he was an Artist in Residence at Artpace San Antonio. Cyrus has won several awards, including the Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Award, the Artadia Houston Award, and the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship. He has participated in national and international exhibitions, including *The Freedom Principle: Experiments in Art and Music, 1965 – Now*, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Chicago, IL (traveled to ICA Philadelphia, 2016); *Arresting Patterns*, ArtSpace, New Haven, CT (traveled to the African American Museum in Philadelphia, 2016); two exhibitions at the Studio Museum, Harlem (both 2013); the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (2012); the New Museum, New York (2011); The Kitchen, New York (2009); the Museum of London Docklands, London (2009); and The Office Baroque Gallery, Antwerp (2007). In 2006 Cyrus was included in *Day for Night*, the 2006 Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Cyrus is also a member of the artist collective Otabenga Jones and Associates. With the collective, Cyrus has exhibited at Lawndale Art Center, Houston (2014), Project Row Houses, Houston (2014), the High Museum of Art, Atlanta (2008), the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC (2008), the California African American Museum, Los Angeles (2008), the Menil Collection, Houston (2007), the 2006 Whitney Biennial, and Clementine Gallery, New York (2006). Cyrus's and Otabenga Jones's work has been reviewed in *Artlies*, *The Houston Chronicle*, *Houston Magazine*, and *The New York Times*.

Special event:

Saturday, November 12th, 2:00pm Jamal Cyrus "When Images Are Deployed".

This event is free but seating is limited – arrive early!

This presentation focuses on what the artist understands as the political, psychological and spiritual deployment of imagery within our society. Extending photography's role beyond the selfie and the documentary, Cyrus will explore the ways in which the medium operates in a realm of powerful symbolic frameworks that control our movement and thought, addressing these concepts as they relate to his photographic, sculptural, and installation work.

¹Aaron Douglas quoted in Fabre, Genevieve, and Robert G. O'Meally. *History and memory in African-American culture*. Oxford University Press on Demand, 1994, p. 241.