

NOEL ANDERSON**GET LIFTED****Opening reception on November 23rd from 6 to 9pm in presence of the artist.****Exhibition dates : November 24, 2017 – January 6, 2018**

Get Lifted; possibly a command, suggestion, or question. *Get Lifted* headlines as a marker for desire. Sing: "Come on and go with me. There's something new for you to see. Come on and go with me. There's something new for you to see. Just relax, just relax." The piano and beat simultaneously descend. John Legend's words in *Let's Get Lifted* advent like a slave spiritual; delivering the spirit of the enslaved, invoking a call towards (sexual) liberation. What he's *talking* about is the intoxicating sexual experience similar to consuming drugs: the black male body. George McCrae's *I get Lifted*, tells a similar narrative. Sing: "I get lifted up hu, high. I get lifted up hu, high." What both of these songs do is express the black male body as a site of desire.

Noel W Anderson's, *Get Lifted*, picks up at the Legend-McCrae sexual bridge, reweaving this desire into Jacquard tapestries dealing with the Other's fascination of black bodies – dead or alive. Anderson uses wit and skill in relating the physiological similarities between lynched and leaping bodies, as this exhibition subtly relates 19th and 20th century lynching of black males to the athletic feat of a slam dunk. Images of black male basketball players are woven into luxurious Jacquard tapestries. Cropped from the waist down, black bodies enter from the tops of compositions. This suspension implicitly draws relationships between lynching and dunking: formal and conceptual.

Obvious is the formal, corporeal suspension commanded by *lift*. More curious is the conceptual *leap*. One – lynching – is a murderous enactment of white contempt for black progress. Lynching disguised this contempt or fear of black sexuality. (Black male sexual abuse of white women was but one excuse for mob party murder). The other – dunking – continues to celebrate black athletic achievement. Both cases *spectacle* black bodies, and employ them as objects of mass unification.

Working with a team of weavers, Anderson appropriates, manipulates, and weaves images into a series of tapestries. Upon completion, he meticulously labors over each thread. Through the physicality of distressing, dyeing, and collaging Anderson suspends the mediums of these works between tapestry, photography, painting, printmaking, and sculpture. The disguising of mediums replicates historical subjugation of black bodies, as well as Anderson's treatment of subjects, images, and meaning. Further supporting attempts at veiling, distressing and dyes are employed to persistently complicate the viewing experience. In some instances, images blur as the tapestry fibers optically blend from distressing. In other cases, images dissolve and emerge from fields of ambient color. In a small work titled *Mob* (2017) the audience encounters a dyed tapestry, filled with murky fields of black, blue, and purple out of which emerge two dangling legs from the composition's

summit. The word "mob" hauntingly glows across the dark field as if knifed in the surface. A return to the sexual bridge allows the viewer to speculate multiple meanings: Sing: "Are these legs athletic? Are they in torment; tortured?" These suspended legs are in-fact trapped between two viewing parties: the mass in the image and the viewer/s in the gallery. It seems that Anderson won't let the audience out of the paradox of viewing: the black body again is the object of unification. But maybe the tapestries are black bodies – sites of unification. Unified are the mediums, concepts, and audiences. In this murky space, how does the audience emerge whole ?

Noel Anderson was born in Louisville, Kentucky in 1981 and lives in New York City, NY. After receiving an MFA in Printmaking from Indiana University, he received an MFA in Sculpture from Yale University. He was a professor at the University of Cincinnati from 2011-2015 and is now an Assistant Professor at NYU's Art and Art Professions Department in Print Media. Anderson was included in the Studio Museum of Harlem's exhibition *Speaking of People: Ebony, Jet, and Contemporary Art* in 2014 and more recently held a remarkable solo show at the Contemporary Art Center of Cincinnati (February - June 2017) which was later followed by renown artists such as Ugo Rondinone (May - August 2017) and Njideka Akunyili Crosby (July - October 2017). GET LIFTED is the second solo show of Noel Anderson at the Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery.