

JAYSON MUSSON
WE SING IN A DEAD LANGUAGE
29 March – 4 May, 2019

Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery is pleased to welcome NY-based artist Jayson Musson for his first solo show at the gallery.

On the ground floor, the works are all made from Coogi sweaters that Jayson Musson deconstructs and reassembles into uxurious paintings. This vibrant vintage textured knits constitute a raw material of uncommon allure and is closely associated with hip-hop nostalgia of the 80's and 90's.

Coogi sweaters "The Cosby show" - in particular Dr. Heathcliff Huxtable - that has revolutionized the image of the African-American population. The rappers, among them Notorious B.I.G., Drake or A.\$.A.P. Mob - appropriated these colorful sweaters at exorbitant prices in the early 1990s and made them popular.

Musson creates multi-leveled, mixed-media objects that explore themes of identity, exile, cultural relevance, sexual identification, and emotionally compelling issues. Like an archaeologist, he is always on the look-out for whatever pushes the limits of his past and his present. Elements from public activities and situations such as literature, music, travel, family and friends influence his work as a way to make them accessible to a broader audience. He uses the act of painting as the most recognizable sign of art while introducing elements that reflect a new artistic thought. He is interested in how people define them-selves through their publicly manifested constructed identities.

Downstairs, 16 gouaches on paper refer to art history and remind of Matisse cut-out forms. They address contemporary issues, including immigration and police brutality, from both a personal and political perspective. The several gouaches entitled *Ancestor I, II and III* are homages to Musson's "elders": his aunt Delphine, his grandfather Henry, and his grandmother Mavis. "As the child of immigrants, I wanted to connect myself to a larger history of people making journeys to places where their children could have more opportunity, which is an experience I do not take lightly, or for granted." In the *Dialectic* suite, the artist telegraphs the world's endless penchant for violence, from police brutality and mass shootings in the U.S.A. to the rising tensions with North Korea and the spread of terrorist attacks in Europe. Addressing historical references in *Odalisque's Refusal* the artist depicts a scene of fight between oppressor and oppressed. *The Rape of the Sabines* makes reference to the Roman mythology episode in which men of Rome committed a mass abduction of young women from the neighboring tribes. On a lighter side, in *The Center of the Universe*, Musson pays tribute to both Courbet's *Origin of the World* and Duchamp's *Étant Donnés*. The ambiguous figure in *Someone I Don't Know Yet* mixes identities of a traditional Daruma Japanese doll with an African masked figure.

Jayson Musson was born in New York in 1977. He obtained his MFA in painting at the University of Pennsylvania in 2011. He has been regularly shown at Salon 94 (2017, 2014 and 2012). He is part of the collections of the MoMa (New York), the Philadelphia Museum of Art (Philadelphia) and the Museum of Modern Art Grand-Duc Jean of Luxembourg (Luxembourg).