

NOEL W. ANDERSON

*In Blue Fur*

15 November 2023 - 6 January 2024



*Medieval televangelist*, 2023, Dyed, picked and distressed stretched cotton tapestry, 190.5 x 264.16 cm (75 x 104 in)

Zidoun-Bossuyt Paris is pleased to present *In Blue Fur*, Noel W. Anderson's latest solo show.

*In Blue Fur* is an attempt at suturing multiple histories, all of which share a curious relationship to the capture, cooptation and possession of black performance: Anderson aims to explore its racial, cultural, historical, and political implications. It starts in a dark age and draws from medieval illustrations, in which Anderson reads an expression of corporeal capture and cultural possession of blackness. His technique reproduces some of these illustrations in cotton tapestry and hand dyes them in a brilliant turquoise bath: blue is at the core of Anderson's exploration of his medium. He employs the history of Jacquard tapestry making – specifically English mathematician Charles Babbage's use of the medium's binary codes to construct what most consider as the origin of computers and television – to explore the site in which black performers are generally visible: the screen. Once the tapestries dry, they are distressed, causing the cotton threads to turn fuzzy and softening the image. Through this frame, comic images of the famous basketball group, the Harlem Globetrotters, allow

Anderson to provide a counter-performance to the medieval narrative grounding the show. For the artist basketball is an available format through which to explore African American performance. In the artist's words, "As Jasper Johns gives his audience a familiar image in the American flag to take them somewhere, I use recognizable images to get my audience to seriously consider what tapestries can be made to do, and how they can transform the viewer."

In a signature piece in the show, *Medieval Televangelist*, Anderson weaves a copy of the Master of Los Balbases's *A Verger's Dream: Saints Cosmas and Damian Performing a Miraculous Cure by Transplantation of a Leg (1495)*, where the two saints miraculously transplant the leg of a recently deceased Ethiopian man onto the body of a white christian official with a diseased leg. Drawing from *Golden Legend* – a 13<sup>th</sup> century collection of 153 hagiographies about the legendary lives of medieval saints – Medieval and Renaissance European artists saw this image as a testament to God's power by suturing the dead black leg to the lacking white body. Anderson reads it as an expression of capture and cooptation and interprets the narrative as supporting an image of possessing blackness, corporeally and culturally. In a miraculous act of transubstantiation, Anderson's new technique of dying and softening the surface equally attenuates the charge of the "religio-medical" echo of the capture and cooptation of blackness.

### **Biography**

Noel W. Anderson (b. 1981, Louisville, Kentucky) is based in Harlem and works primarily with printmaking and French weaving. He received an MFA from Indiana University in Printmaking, and an MFA from Yale University in Sculpture. He is also Area Head of Printmaking in New York University's Steinhardt Department of Art and Art Professions. Noel has been awarded the NYFA artist fellowship grant (Interdisciplinary, 2018), the prestigious Jerome Camargo Prize, and the paper making residency at Dieu Donné. Noel W. Anderson's artworks have recently been acquired by The David and Alfred Smart Museum of the Art at the University of Chicago, IL; the Kalamazoo Institute of Art, MI; Frac Sud of Marseille, France and MUDAM Luxembourg. His solo show, *Black Exhaustion*, is currently on view at Salzburger Kunstverein, Austria. In April 2024, Noel W. Anderson will be part of *Des exploits, des chefs-d'oeuvre*, a project initiated by the Frac Sud - Cité de l'art contemporain, in partnership with the MuCEM - Musée des Civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée.