

LOWELL RYAN PROJECTS

Art Viewer

SPECIAL FEATURE: The Armory Show 2020
(PIER 90)

April 9, 2020



Kumasi J. Barnett at Lowell Ryan Projects

Venue: The Armory Show, New York, US

Date: March 6 – 8, 2020

by Kiki Petratou

THE ARMORY SHOW

March 5-8 2020

Piers 90 and 94 at 711 12th Avenue, Manhattan

“The essential New York art fair” (as it is branded by its organizers) massive in scale and offer occupied Pier 90 and Pier 94. All of Pier 90 was devoted to curated sections: “Perspectives”, a historical section of 20th century work evocative of the earlier days of the

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fair, lead by Nora Burnett Abrams of the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, and “Focus” devoted to solo and dual artist presentations, curated by Jamillah James of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Pier 94 included for the biggest part a little bit of everything in the fair’s core and most established section “Galleries”; the “Presents” section showcasing galleries no more than ten years old and “Platform” curated by Anne Ellegood (also of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles) and devoted to large scale installations and performances.

In sort the Armory Show would suit anyone who wanted a taste of everything as the fair sprawled tensed past and present. Here are some themes, lines and motifs that caught my attention through the different sections of the fair.



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FOCUS

“Colonialism Is State Sponsored Terror” reads a text in **Umar Rashid/ Frohawk Two Feathers’** undoubtedly compelling political work, seen at **New Image Art**. His images contain a mash up of historical and cultural references combining elements of 18th and 19th century colonial portraiture and folk art with visual signifiers of contemporary urban culture, including jewelry and body art associated with present-day gangsters and hipsters. Frohawk Two Feathers wryly points to the instability of public histories and confronts issues of race, power, and greed.

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Viktor Popović's photographic installation “Untitled (Archive: Zenčišće)” at **C24 Gallery** juxtaposes old images of the former resort/rehabilitation center for children from Belgrade at the Zenčišće Bay in Jelsaon, with new photographs of the same site in its dilapidated and beyond hope of reconstruction state — a simple but effective visual essay on the lasting effects of war.

Addressing real world issues but through a superhuman genre, **Kumasi J. Barnett** at **Lowell Ryan Projects** negotiates the relation between contemporary American narratives and the reality of justice making us reexamine cultural conceptions surrounding the Good versus Evil paradigm. His presentation features 100 hand-painted comic book works pinned up in their clear plastic sleeves, and a large-scale neon sign in the style of the comic book titles. For each work, Barnett has painted over the cover of an old Marvel or DC comic book, replacing familiar heroes with characters including “The Amazing Black-Man”, “Whitedevil”, and “Police-Man”. Barnett replaces Superman’s logo with the stars and bars of the Confederate flag and Spider-Man’s full-body leotard with a hoodie and jeans, and turns the supernatural villains into (a no less brutal nemesis) the police.

Photography: © Kiki Petratou / all images courtesy of the artists and galleries



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