

5 of the Best Artworks to Be Found at the Armory Show, From a \$210,000 Livestream of the Sun to the 'Amazing Black-Man'

It's well worth sticking your hands in your pockets and heading out to the fair this year.

Andrew Goldstein, March 5, 2020

Kumasi J. Barnett
The Amazing Black-Man, 2016-2020
Lowell Ryan Projects – Los Angeles
Price: \$2,500 apiece for the comic books, \$20,000 for the neon



For anyone (like yours truly) whose first exposure to the world of collectible visual art was via superhero comics, Kusami J. Barnett's solo booth in the fair's Focus section might seem almost too good to be true. Relevant, socially incisive artworks made out of *actual collectible comic books*? Great Krypton!



Of course, the subject of Barnett's art is not fun at all. What he's done is detourn Spider-Man as "The Amazing Black-Man," hand painting jeans and a grey hoodie over the webslinger's costume and reimagining our hero as fighting for his survival against a slew of foes that include "Police-Man" (sometimes Venom, sometimes other characters), "The Media's Thug" (formerly the Incredible Hulk), a racist Captain America, Congress, the Democrats, and a version of Shazam whose magic word is... the N-word. In all, there are 100 comic adapted books—each responsibly encased in a

polybag—hanging on the wall beneath a glowing neon sign. Some of the originals are (relatively) valuable, in fact.

Born in Baltimore, Barnett teaches at the Art Institute of Chicago, and has a show coming up at the Children’s Museum of the Arts in New York. Will his work ever make it into the Marvel Cinematic Universe? Only time will tell.

