



Derrick Adams, *Style Variation 25*, 2019

DERRICK ADAMS TRANSFORMERS

Derrick Adams: Transformers

February 10 – April 4, 2020

Luxembourg & Dayan

2 Savile Row, London W1S 3PA

Opening Reception:

February 10, 2020, 6–8 pm

“Everything that we are is based on a specific construction.” — Derrick Adams

London... Luxembourg & Dayan, London is pleased to announce *Derrick Adams: Transformers*. Opening on February 10, 2020, the exhibition presents striking new large-scale examples from the *Beauty World* series that Adams began earlier in 2019. *Beauty World* includes works titled *Style Variation*, which depict a single figure, and *Style Variation Grid*, which depict 16 figures. To create these ambitious works, Adams reproduces a digital photograph of a wig mannequin on canvas, then paints various hairstyles and makeup in acrylic atop. The resulting paintings investigate the physical and cultural construction of the human form and its role in shaping identity. In particular, these works explore Black feminine empowerment achieved through versatile acts of styling, camouflaging, and costuming.

Beauty World is inspired by the display windows of beauty supply stores, wig shops, braiding and nail salons, and hair boutiques that Adams has observed in his Brooklyn neighborhood. Typical of certain urban areas, these establishments stand as a constant reminder of the possibilities for physical metamorphosis. By reproducing and painting over a mannequin found in these storefronts, the artist pays tribute to these specific social rituals and acts of roleplaying that need not be contextualized or understood, to have value. The *Style Variation* and *Style Variation Grid* works from his *Beauty World* series celebrate the extraordinary efforts of those who partake in beautification and self-transformation, for any and all reasons.

Beauty World expands on Adams' acclaimed *Deconstruction Worker* series of geometric portraits, and exemplifies his artistic pursuits at large. His multidisciplinary practice engages the ways in which individuals' ideals, aspirations, and personae become attached to specific objects, colors, textures, symbols, and ideologies. His work probes the influence of popular culture on the formation of self-image,

and the relationship between man and monument as they coexist and embody one another. Adams is also deeply immersed in questions of how African American experiences intersect with art history, American iconography, and consumerism. In formal terms, his practice is rooted in Deconstructivist philosophies related to the fragmentation and manipulation of structure and surface, and the marriage of complex and improbable forms. His tendency to layer, hybridize, and collage not only images and materials, but also different types of sensory experiences, link Adams to an estimable lineage of pioneers ranging from Hannah Höch and Henri Matisse, to William H. Johnson and Romare Bearden.

On view through April 4, 2020, *Derrick Adams: Transformers* is Luxembourg & Dayan's second solo exhibition with Adams. It follows *Derrick Adams: Interior Life*, presented in the gallery's New York space in 2019. This new exhibition in London is the first since Luxembourg & Dayan announced its joint representation of Adams with Salon 94.

Derrick Adams: Transformers will overlap with two other presentations of Adams' work. At FRIEZE Los Angeles, taking place February 13-16, Salon 94 will present works from *We Came to Party and Plan*, another new series. These pieces, along with a selection of Adams' *Floaters*, will also be presented March 7 - June 14, 2020 at the Hudson River Museum in New York.

About the Artist

Derrick Adams was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1970. He received his MFA from Columbia University and BFA from Pratt Institute. Adams is an alumnus of the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture and Marie Walsh Sharpe Foundation's Studio Program. His critically admired work spans painting, collage, sculpture, performance, video, and sound installations.

Adams is a recipient of a Robert Rauschenberg Foundation Residency (2019), a Gordon Parks Foundation Fellowship (2018), a Studio Museum Joyce Alexander Wein Artist Prize (2016), and a Louis Comfort Tiffany Award (2009). He has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions, including *Derrick Adams — Where I'm From* (2019) at The Gallery in Baltimore City Hall; *Derrick Adams: Sanctuary* (2018) at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York; and *Derrick Adams: Transmission* (2018) at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver; and *The Channel* (2012) at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Adams' work has been presented in numerous important public exhibitions, including *Men of Change: Power. Triumph. Truth.* (2019) at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, Cincinnati; *PERFORMA* (2015, 2013, and 2005); *The Shadows Took Shape* (2014) and *Radical Presence* (2013-14) at The Studio Museum in Harlem; *Greater New York* (2005) at MoMA PS1; and *Open House: Working In Brooklyn* (2004) at the Brooklyn Museum. His work resides in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Studio Museum in Harlem, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, and the Birmingham Museum of Art.



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