

JESSICA SILVERMAN GALLERY

For immediate release

Matthew Angelo Harrison: Prototype of Dark Silhouettes

Jessica Silverman Gallery

March 15 – April 21, 2018

Opening reception: Thursday, March 15, 6-8pm

Jessica Silverman Gallery is pleased to present "Prototype of Dark Silhouettes," an exhibition of 12 sculptures by Matthew Angelo Harrison. Harrison has enjoyed significant displays of his work at the New Museum (NY), Studio Museum (NY) and Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami. He has also had solo shows at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit and Atlanta Contemporary. "Prototype of Dark Silhouettes" is Harrison's first show in a private gallery.

Matthew Angelo Harrison creates otherworldly sculptures that are in conversation with anthropology, science fiction and industrial design. His work combines found objects made from organic materials such as indigenous African wood and bone with synthetic ingredients like acrylic resin, Plexiglas and industrial modeling clay, which he then molds, cuts, prints, and sculpts with state-of-the-art machinery. The resulting forms – whether they are 3D ceramic heads, 3D abstractions, plexi "enclosures" or resin "encapsulations" – investigate the subtle politics of mass production, authenticity, metamorphosis, and what the artist calls "abstract ancestries."

For his "Dark Silhouettes" series, Harrison suspends or "encapsulates" dissections of vintage African sculptures in subtly tinted resin blocks. Some of the figures, heads and masks come from the Makonde and Dogon tribes; others are of unknown origin. Harrison then slices through or burrows holes into some of the blocks and stacks others, producing unique forms that evoke diverse places and times. Both specific and global, contemporary and ancient, grounded and extraterrestrial, Harrison's sculptures set up their own idiosyncratic art historical lineage, which includes artists such as Melvin Edwards, Larry Bell, David Hammons, Damien Hirst and Huma Bhabha.

Many of the found figures in "Dark Silhouettes" are ritual objects, meant to bring fertility to the earth or the community. *Enduring Father* (2018), for example, starts with a vintage wooden sculpture of a man with a child on his back. Harrison pulls the artifact into the world of his studio, which is informed by his hometown of Detroit, the Motor City, a historic manufacturing capital. Before he has done much research into its meaning or origin, the artist entombs the ready-made and alters it in ways that respond freely to its color, shape and texture. He relies on unconscious associations and "finds an aesthetic match with something mechanical" as he puts it. The resulting sculpture is an Afrofuturist balance of peace and violence.

Harrison (b. 1989, Detroit, MI) completed his BFA at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2012. Harrison has had solo shows at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit in 2016 and Atlanta Contemporary in 2017. He currently has six works in the New Museum Triennial and had five pieces in "The Everywhere Studio," the inaugural group show at the ICA Miami. His work has also been included in group exhibitions at the Jewish Museum in New York (2016) and Studio Museum in Harlem (2017). Harrison will be featured in MCA Chicago's group show, "I Was Raised on the Internet," which opens on June 23, 2018. Harrison lives and works in Detroit.