

Esmaa Mohamoud

THREE-PEAT

Opening Reception
Friday | 16 February | 6-9p

16 February – 24 March 2018



ltd los angeles is pleased to present *THREE-PEAT*, Toronto-based Esmaa Mohamoud's first solo gallery exhibition. For her debut, Mohamoud further develops her large-scale installation recently featured at The Art Gallery of Ontario, through her continued investigation into binaries and aesthetics of sports culture as it relates to race and gender, through industrial sculpture, text, and printed photographs on varying medium.

Esmaa Mohamoud (b. 1992) is an African-Canadian sculptor/installation artist, whose practice focuses on the navigation of Black bodies in contemporary spaces. Engaged in the politics surrounding Black male bodies, her recent body of works investigate the intangibility of Blackness through the realm of athletics. Mohamoud re-examines our contemporary understanding of Blackness by challenging the relationship of Blackness as a color and shade, and as a societal or cultural construction of a group of people through the use of industrial materials.

Inspired by the 1994 documentary *Hoop Dreams*, *Heavy, Heavy (Hoop Dreams)*, 2016, is an installation of sixty solid concrete basketballs, uniformly placed upon a slightly elevated square, black plexiglass platform. Each uniquely deflated thirty-pound basketball represents the Black man's battle and relationship with the sport's inherent promises, 'hoop dreams', mostly unfulfilled. This installation activates public space demanding the viewer to acknowledge this harsh reality. Mohamoud's large-scale installation interrupts physical and mental space, proportionate to the Black Man's devotion to the sport's offerings. Her work brings into question the absence of the Black body within public space, as it seeks to challenge our contemporary understanding of Black male identity as constructed through athletics.

Mohamoud's *I am Series* consists of large metal hoops with chains suspending from them. Viewers are encouraged to place their bodies in the net, activating to consider their own bodies in relation to the net, imposing a feeling of entrapment. The net serves as a portal into the experience of the Black man in North American culture. This series, as well as *One of the Boys*, speaks to Black culture's glorification of basketball and its significance as a lucrative career option for the Black man. Each piece within the series is titled after an NBA player, i.e. "*Scottie Pippen*". Referencing the personal branding that occurs when wearing a sports jersey that indices a professional athlete's name and number.

Mohamoud received her MFA from the Ontario College of Art and Design University in 2016. Recent institutional exhibitions include *Every. Now. Then: Reframing Nationhood* at The Art Gallery of Ontario, and *Here We Are Here: Black Canadian Contemporary Art* currently at The Royal Ontario Museum then at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in May 2018.