

LYONS WIER GALLERY

542 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011

FAHAMU PECOU #BLACKMATTERLIVES

October 13 – November 12, 2016

Opening Reception

Thursday, October 13th, 2016

6 - 8pm

Meet The Artist

Saturday, October 15th, 2 - 3pm

Q & A with Fahamu Pecou @ 2:30 pm

Moderated by Michael Lyons Wier

"Healing begins where the wound was made." - Alice Walker

[New York] Lyons Wier Gallery is pleased to announce the exhibition,
#BLACKMATTERLIVES by **Fahamu Pecou**.

The first time I viewed Fahamu's work, I felt his painting prowess was only surpassed by his astute storytelling. Fahamu has long used self-portraiture to shed light on what he felt were social misconceptions and injustices of African American men and how they were/are portrayed in popular culture, hip-hop culture and mainstream media. Drawing upon his alter-ego, "Fahamu Pecou is The Shit," Fahamu developed a visual trope to address these societal ills using mastheads, swagger and ingenious double entendres.

#BLACKMATTERLIVES is the culmination of Fahamu's four consecutive museum shows, including "Do or Die," (an exhibition representing aspects of his research as a PhD student) currently on view at the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art, Charleston, SC. These shows provided Fahamu with the opportunity to further mine his trope and emerge with a new vocabulary. A vocabulary that synthesizes not only what is happening around him, but also what is going on inside of him. With **#BLACKMATTERLIVES**, he shifts from being a general narrator to a very personal raconteur, stripping away many of the secondary visual triggers that were used in his earlier works to ease the viewer into his own perceptions and personae. In **#BLACKMATTERLIVES**, Fahamu delivers a watershed series, wrought with unabashed angst, anger and adulations.

There is an undeniable racial disconnect happening not only in the United States but around the world. Fahamu has his finger on the pulse of this divide and is using it to tell a very personal tale. The raw emotions portrayed in this exhibition are palpable. The twisting and writhing of the body immediately draws reference to the 'Black Lives Matter' campaign, but it does not take much imagination to transfer these emotions from the subject (the artist) to the multitude of people suffering around the world.

Pecou states, "Black Americans grow up with near schizophrenic emotions about our value and place in society. On one hand, we are celebrated and commodified--on the other, vilified and feared. We wrestle daily with a stigmatization that promotes a sense of worthlessness and angst and that often animates Black comportment.

#BLACKMATTERLIVES attempts to reorient this angst and despair. There exists inherent brilliance, beauty and transformative power within the Black body. Interminable, innovatory, resourceful, resilient... Blackness persists! It persists not despite the trauma with which it is often associated, but rather, because of it. It persists because each attempt to deny its power is an invitation for its expansion. Each attempt to break the spirit of Blackness only opens it up more, freeing Black matter to pursue higher and more elaborate states of being.

Black Matter Lives. Now. Always."

Lyons Wier Gallery is to honored host **#BLACKMATTERLIVES** and to have traveled with Fahamu Pecou along this journey over last ten years, to watch him grow not only as an artist, but more importantly, as a human being.



Blasting Holes...., 2016 Acrylic, gold leaf, spray paint, enamel on canvas, 60 x 48 in / 152.4 x 122 cm

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#BLACKMATTERLIVES is Fahamu Pecou's sixth solo exhibition with Lyons Wier Gallery. He has been featured in several solo and group museum exhibitions in the US and abroad. Museum shows include "Talking Drum," National Center for Civil and Human Rights, Atlanta, GA., "Do or Die," Halsey Museum of Art, Charleston, SC., "Imagining New Worlds," High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA., "State of the Art" Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR., "GRAV-I-TY," at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia (MOCAGA), "Southern Accent: Seeking the South in Contemporary Art," Nasher Museum of Art Duke University, Durham, NC., "REMIX: Themes and Variations in African-American Art," Columbia Museum of Art, Columbia, SC., Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA, the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MoCADA), Brooklyn, NY, the Wadsworth Athenaeum Museum, Amistad Center, Hartford, CT, and Austin Museum of Art, Austin, TX.

Pecou's work has been reviewed in numerous publications such as Art in America, Harper's Magazine, NY Arts Magazine, among others. He is a recipient of the Artadia Award (2009), the first ever Artist in Resident for the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Arts & Culture Resident at the McColl Center for Visual Art in Charlotte, NC (2010) and a winner of the 2012 West Collection Prize. Pecou's work is featured in noted private and public collections including the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, D.C., the Nasher Museum at Duke University, The High Museum of Art, Paul R. Jones Collection, Clark Atlanta University Art Collection, The Museum of Contemporary Art Georgia, The West Collection and Societe Generale, Paris, France, among others. Pecou is currently completing his Ph.D. degree at the Institute of Liberal Arts (ILA) at Emory University. Fahamu Pecou lives and works in Atlanta, GA.

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