

NIGHT GALLERY

2276 E. 16th Street, Los Angeles, California 90021

nightgallery.ca

ANTHONY OLUBUNMI AKINBOLA

Market

May 15 – June 12, 2021

Night Gallery is pleased to present *Market*, an exhibition of new work by Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola. This is the artist's first presentation at the gallery.

Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola's work responds to and updates the legacy of the readymade, placing the sculptural mode of inquiry in dialogue with traditions of abstract painting. Formal exchanges within and between Akinbola's artworks push his materials away from their typical cultural and historical evocations, emphasizing plays of color and texture while highlighting unexpected thematic associations. Throughout the artist's process he has used durags as a primary material to continue the investigations of the Color Field and Action Painting movements. Each successive series of paintings takes up its own line of aesthetic inquiry, exploring the properties and possibilities of his medium through attention to color, fabric, drapery, and composition. Rather than negating the cultural connotations of the durag altogether, these works invite the viewer to both engage and detach their preconceptions at will, exploring how changing contexts create newfound activations of the familiar.

Akinbola's exhibition *Market* is centered around new paintings that extend his series "CAMOUFLAGE," each one working within shades of a single hue, evoking the narrow color schemes of military fatigues. These are situated amid an array of readymades invigorated by simple but radical acts of alteration. These include found sculptures that the artist has glazed in vibrant hues of pearlescent enamel, giving their carved wooden features the appearance of 21st-century products. In the middle of the viewing space stands a taxidermied boar, mid-stride. The exhibition space takes on the atmosphere of an archive whose hybrid objects playfully elude categorization. Defying taxonomic interpretation, the works instead suggest a chain of production, gesturing toward the migration and transformation of materials and cultures, questioning in particular a dichotomy between Africa and Black America. These dynamics can also be found in Akinbola's paintings, which allude to camouflage not only in name or in their monochromatic compositions but also in their materials themselves: durags, used to maintain and compress Black hair, can be understood as tools of assimilation, though stretched across the canvas they are themselves rendered nearly unrecognizable. Indeed, Akinbola's deceptively simple works become monuments to disguise, leaving the viewer in an intermediary space between transaction and transcendence.

Anthony Olubunmi Akinbola (b. 1991) has been included in solo and group exhibitions at venues including the Queens Museum, New York; the Museum of Arts and Design, New York; the Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI; FALSE FLAG, New York; and Zuckerman Museum of Art, Kennesaw, Georgia. He has been a resident artist at the Anderson Ranch Arts Center, Snowmass, Colorado; DordtYart, Dordrecht, Netherlands; and Verbeke Foundation, Kemzeke, Belgium. He lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.