

ETHAN COHEN



ART HISTORY X Jeffrey Spencer Hargrave

October 6th- November 23rd, 2018
Opening Reception 6th of October 2018 from 4-6 p.m.

Ethan Cohen Gallery is pleased to announce its first New York solo exhibition of Jeffrey Spencer Hargrave, entitled ART HISTORY X. The show highlights Hargrave's body of work made between 2015 and 2018 where the artist reimagines the canon of art history in the context of sexuality, identity, and today's fraught racial divides. Colorful, and indeed almost kitsch in parts, his paintings surprise and tease the eye's expectations by subverting revered classics - familiar to us but joyously reconstituted through an African-American and gay prism. The result is dramatic and highly personal, reflecting Hargrave's own life's struggles to find any semblance of himself in the legendary pinnacles of Western art.

Hargrave addresses the major issues of our time using intimate and humorous vehicles like his works on paper, recycled household objects and more recently mid-size canvases, in which he deconstructs such modern masters as Matisse, Modigliani, Manet and others of their ilk. His series *Phallic Politics* posits the perspective "the other" as implicit witness and consists of authentic posters from China's Cultural Revolution

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covered with cartoonish characters frequently used in the visual vocabulary of the artist. In other works, themes of pleasure, sexuality and urban life style are depicted in the Ukiyo-e stylized works on paper and canvas created in the artist's studio in Harlem where he has been based since 2013.

Hargrave's work speaks to the world but through a visual language deconstructed and reshaped by the artist's emotional experience of isolation and yearning for identity, as he taps into his own memories of growing up in the midst of a sharply divided community. **Hargrave** translates his personal experiences into playful, yet biting images that mix art-history clichés and racial stereotypes. Ultimately, the artist asks us to consider a 'What If' hypothetical in which the missing persona - himself and his kind - is included in the picture.

Jeffrey Hargrave attended the University of the North Carolina School of the Arts, Rhode Island School of Design, and Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. His works have been exhibited at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, Art Miami, Contemporary Istanbul, KuBe Beacon, VOLTA Basel and other important platforms for cultural exchange and engagement.

For all inquires please contact ecfa@ecfa.com

Credit line: Courtesy of the artist and Ethan Cohen Gallery

On image:

Jeffrey Spencer Hargrave
Fish Fry on Da' Grass (Version 3)
Acrylic on canvas
40 x 60 in (101.6 x 152.4 cm)
2016

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