

moniquemeloche

JEFF SONHOUSE: *ENTRAPMENT*

June 9 – August 18, 2018

Entrapment, Jeff Sonhouse's first solo show with moniquemeloche, and the inaugural exhibition in the gallery's new, expanded location on North Paulina in West Town, will present new paintings and works on paper that continue the artist's ongoing interrogation of African American male identity and its representation in Western culture. Sonhouse's deftly painted figures combine classical technical sensibility with an irreverent approach to color and material. Drawing upon the art historical legacy of portraiture as well as his own, unique visual language, honed over many years, Sonhouse populates his works with characters both particular and general. His ominous, surreal compositions feature black male figures that are highly charged and curiously anonymous. Their manifold potency suggests a range of psychological narratives that engage the viewer in their unraveling, and which move away from racial specificity, offering the possibility of a more open-ended, humanistic interpretation. In that spirit, Sonhouse's use of vernacular materials is meaningful conceptually and formally; it lures the viewer away from a formulated reading toward a removed and renewed visual experience. Indeed, Sonhouse often incorporates steel wool or matchsticks in his compositions, painstakingly whittled and adhered to the finished canvas before being lit, resulting in the presence of something smoky, scorched. Here, the notion of "baptism by fire" is evoked; rebirth through crisis. This echoes Sonhouse's challenge to the viewer, who is pushed to re-see the representation of black male identity through the artist's alighting prism.

Jeff Sonhouse (American, b. 1968) received his BFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York in 1998 and his MFA from Hunter College, New York in 2001. In 2004, Sonhouse received awards from the Joan Mitchell Foundation, New York, and the New York Foundation for the Arts. Notable exhibitions include *Probable Cause*, Atlanta Contemporary Art Center (solo, 2003); *Frequency*, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2005); *30 Americans*, The Rubell Family Collection, Miami (2008), which continues to travel throughout the US, including Tuscon Museum of Art, AZ (2018), and Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO (2019); *Jeff Sonhouse: Slow Motion*, Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs (solo, 2014); and *Face to Face: Los Angeles Collects Portraiture*, California African American Museum, Los Angeles (2017). His work can be found in public collections including Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, NC; Artist Pension Trust, New York; Rubell Family Collection, Miami; and The Pizzuti Collection, Columbus, OH. Sonhouse first exhibited at moniquemeloche in *Things Fall Apart* (2005), a group exhibition organized by then-independent curator Franklin Sirmans, current Director of Pérez Art Museum, Miami. The artist lives and works in New York.