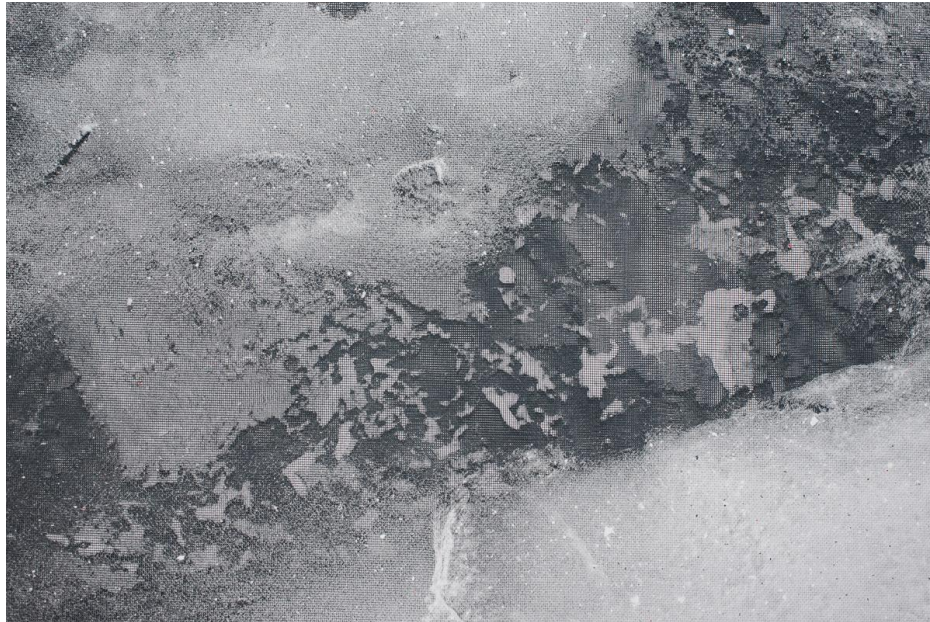


Sotheby's INSTITUTE OF ART

PAPER Plains, Tahir Carl Karmali ***Curated by Klaudia Draber***



Opening Reception: Wednesday, May 2, 6-8 PM

Sotheby's Institute of Art New York
570 Lexington Avenue, 6th floor
RSVP to exhibitionrsvp@sia.edu

Sotheby's Institute of Art is pleased to present *PAPER Plains*, Tahir Carl Karmali's (b. 1987) solo exhibition, curated by Klaudia Draber. Free and open to the public, the exhibition is on view at the Sotheby's New York campus from May 2nd through May 8th, 2018 and marks the seventh installment in a series of projects curated by MA students enrolled in Curating Contemporary Art. Preliminary registration before your visit is mandatory.

On view are Karmali's photographs, sculptures and a sound installation exploring his longstanding interest in migrant identities and the sense of belonging in two recent bodies of work. *Displaced* consists of four portraits from the first series the artist created upon arrival in New York in 2015. These formal portraits seek to evoke the feeling of living in an indeterminate space and Karmali disrupts the traditional capturing of the subjects by separating the figure from the background with a translucent plastic backdrop, referencing the lush fabric drapery seen in Baroque portrait paintings. This intervention creates a feeling of fleetingness and the artist seems not to be allowing the viewer to learn more about the subject.

Also on view is a new series of sculptures entitled *PAPER:work*, which tackles the complexities of identity of African migrants as shaped by nationality, authenticity,

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documentation and borders. As a migrant Kenyan himself, Karmali uses paper to reference legitimacy and validation: the fragile, large scale, white and grey handmade paper sculptures are created with dissolved and filtered photocopies of the artist's passport and visa applications. The red rust on the large sheets of paper is reminiscent of the color of the red soil of artist's homeland. Additional small scale sculptures are embedded with copies of photos and ID documents used during colonial and post-independence eras in Kenya. The works are accompanied by a sound installation of a looped recording of the paper-making process, resembling the oceans as a natural force eroding our ideas around physical borders.

Karmali obtained a Masters of Digital Photography at the School of Visual Arts in New York City. He has been a part of numerous prestigious residencies including Triangle Arts Association, Pioneer Works, Trestle and BRIC and in 2017 he was featured in Forbes Magazine as one of the 30 Under 30 Arts & Style personalities. Recently he exhibited at Rachel Uffner Gallery in New York City, the Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, the Circle Art Agency in Nairobi and the Tacoma Art Museum.

For images and more information please contact Klaudia.Draber@sia.edu.

Image: *PAPER:work*, screen, wire mesh and paper, 25'x 4', 2016. Courtesy the artist.