

Ravi Jackson: *Hardcore*

David Lewis

57 Walker Street

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David Lewis is pleased to announce representation of American artist Ravi Jackson (b. 1985, Santa Barbara, CA; lives and works in Los Angeles, CA). *Hardcore* is Ravi Jackson's debut solo exhibition at David Lewis, and his first solo show in New York.

Jackson's work uses imagery and text from popular culture as a way to negotiate ideas about race, art, and sexuality. Jackson claims as a complex influence the writings of Eldridge Cleaver – former Black Panther, entrepreneur, turned Born Again Christian and Reagan Republican, and author of *Soul on Ice* (1968) – that focuses on reclaiming black male sexuality, and the cis male nuclear family, as a route to black agency.

For the exhibition, Jackson has reimagined the Renaissance altarpiece tradition as shrines to cultural figures including Rihanna and Kurt Russell, extending the DIY, experimental, “Helter Skelter” Los Angeles energetic heritage through constructing with found objects such as mirrored cabinets, door stoppers, incense as well as handmade candles and cushions that were stitched by the artist.

Hardcore is named after Lil' Kim's 1996 first album, reflecting on the pop cultural archetype of a black woman as a hypersexual and violent protector, that presents as radically unburdened by Cleaver's more retrograde politics.

Two of the Rihanna altarpieces use images from an article about her fashion sense, from a Dutch magazine called *Jackie* from 2011, that address a larger conversation about the meaning of race and black sexuality.

Kurt Russell, a subject who has often appeared in Jackson's work, is a white counterpart to Cleaver's views. In his movies, Russell presents a specific masculinity that has an idealized roughness that is also manicured and groomed which can be seen as a feminized homoerotic characterization.

Ravi Jackson received a BA from Oberlin College in 2007 and a BFA from Hunter College in 2012, before receiving his MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2013. Recent shows include PAGE(NYC) at Petzel, Petzel; Reassembly, Galerie Nordenhake. He previously curated *Eye Control* (2021) and was included in the group show *A Mimic Theory of Desire* (2022) at David Lewis.

