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# NOEL W ANDERSON

## *It's Magic*

**Opening:**  
Thursday  
18 November, 2021  
from 3pm to 8pm



*It's Magic*, 2021  
Picked, stretched Jacquard tapestry  
198 x 269 cm | 78 x 106 in

Fondazione Mudima is pleased to welcome the first solo exhibition of American artist Noel W Anderson in Milan, Italy.

For the occasion, Anderson worked on 24 new woven tapestries continuing his exploration of black male subjectivities. Initially realized in his first museum exhibition, *Black Origin Moment* (presented at Contemporary Arts Center in Cincinnati in 2017), Anderson's concern with the cultural consequences of images gets extended in these most recent works.

Titled *it's Magic*, from the work of the same name that will be on view at the foundation which represent an image of NBA Hall of Famer and LA Laker great, Magic Johnson dribbling a ball, revealing his shadow as a reflection. "It is magic how Johnson's black body dissolves into a reflected shadow", the artist is adding: "I am thinking about this shadow the way author Ralph Ellison in *Invisible Man* and theorist Franz Fanon discuss the non-being of black people's being like a shadow. This show is about realizing a certain kind of spiritual, supernatural, magical power of black male subjects and bodies through the process of inversion."

Noel W. Anderson is using found archive images from TV, magazines and other medias that represent the American vision of Black Masculinity. Images are then distorted through inversion which call the viewers to reassess the immediate meaning of the image itself. The artist attempts to give a new narrative to the Black Male identity and challenge the viewer in seeing beyond what is. Using the method of weaving and the art of tapestry, Anderson distorts the pictures, which give the impression of looking at a tv screen or an image in motion. The body of works presented in the exhibition is questioning self-identity, as an inner search for the artist himself as a black American male, and for the society as a whole which participate consciously or unconsciously to the continuity of the vision and place of black bodies in contemporary culture.

The works also challenged the method of weaving, which echoes the origin of photography and screen culture through a medieval practice that was used to depict everyday scenes of the society of the time. The technic itself also echoes black labors during slavery: "Because the works themselves are woven of cotton, I'm literally in the studio picking cotton, so there's a whole other historical and conceptual leap that I'm trying to get to. So even by the process itself I'm trying to get to an encounter with black labor. Those lynchings are black labor that is placed on the black body." The works on view *Make me come out myself* (2021), *Spectral Shout* (2020-2021) and *Le Bron Van Trill Again (trillingen)* (2020-2021) "visualize the supernatural through excessive labor: (...) I excessively over-picked the tapestries threads, resulting in a surface of scramble threads/wires of supernatural energy. I'm seeking to push representation and abstraction through tapestry weaving and painting. I'm particularly drawn to the historical relationship between painting and tapestry weaving." Following the tradition of American artists depicting sports, Anderson is using basketball and its icons such as Michael Jordan, Spud Webb, or Magic Johnson to question and challenge viewers to rethink their relationship to the black body that is used as a spectacle in front of a white audience.

Catalog published by Mudima, with a critic text by Jade Barget

About the artist **Noel W Anderson** (1981, Louisville, KY) received an MFA from Indiana University in Printmaking, and an MFA from Yale University in Sculpture. He is also Area Head of Printmaking in NYU's Steinhardt Department of Art and Art Professions. Anderson utilizes print-media and arts-based-research to explore philosophical inquiry methodologies. He primarily focuses on the mediation of socially constructed images on identity formation as it relates to black masculinity and celebrity. In 2018, Noel was awarded the NYFA artist fellowship grant and the prestigious Jerome Prize. His solo exhibition *Blak Origin Moment* debuted at the Contemporary Arts Center (Cincinnati) in February 2017 and travelled to the Hunter Museum of American Art in October 2019. His first monograph, *Blak Origin Moment*, was also recently published.

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**Fondazione Mudima**  
Via Tadino 26, Milano  
Orario: dal lunedì al venerdì  
ore 11-13, 15-19  
**Ingresso libero**

**19 November – 17 December 2021**  
**from Monday to Friday, 11am-1pm and 3pm-7pm.**  
**Closed on Saturday and Sunday.**