

STEVE TURNER

PRESS RELEASE



The Armory Show
Pier 90, Booth F29
Laylah Ali & Jon Key
March 4-8, 2020

Steve Turner is pleased to present a two-person booth featuring works by Laylah Ali (born 1968, Buffalo, New York) and Jon Key (born 1990, Seale, Alabama). While separated by a generation, both artists mine the same territory of race and gender to create psychologically loaded and open-ended narratives that reflect their respective experiences. Both utilize a visual language of austere simplicity and bright colors to create their distinctive works.

Laylah Ali's most recent body of work, *The Acephalous Series*, consists of characters that resemble humans but differ in striking ways. Some lack heads; others have two heads; some have arms; others do not; some are pink, some are brown and some are blue. The range of variation is broad. It is stark and it is subtle. As with much of Ali's work, they are rendered with great precision. The figures are flat, entirely devoid of dimension. According to Ali, all of her works are shaped by the ugly racism she experienced growing up and her characters represent the disconnect between bodily existence and freedom.

Jon Key's works feature his own likeness as a contorted black man a variety of poses against green, black, violet and red backgrounds. The colors render the figure flamboyant and provocative while the tight framing stifles his freedom. Key limits his palette to these four colors to acknowledge his Southern roots, his Blackness, his Queerness and his family. At the Armory Show, he will also introduce some new works which include his mother, father, grandmother and brother.

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