

BORTOLAMI

The Upstairs:

Lucky For Men

Chivas Clem, Kayode Ojo and Borna Sammak

Curated by David Rimanelli

15 January – 27 February 2021

What is a man? And who is an artist? Most impolite but let's say it: What is a gay, or who? The presence though hardly the hegemonic force of queer people in the history of art, Modernism, the contemporary art world, etc., has been acknowledged for quite some time, though rather in a more discreet yes-we-know-but-the-world-doesn't way. Once, I was moved to plan a group show that consisted entirely of gay men, and my dream line-up included Ellsworth Kelly, Robert Rauschenberg, John Cage, Jasper Johns, and maybe Forrest Bess as a wild card, artists whose work is not inextricably tied up with (the artist's) sexuality. Warhol, no: Too many drag queens at the Factory, too obvious, delicious and awful but "everybody knows." That was 1990. A different time. Now the decorum but also the hypocrisies of bygone days are vanquished, or just forgotten, and nobody needs shelter in the shade of "yes we know but ___".

- David Rimanelli

Chivas Clem (b. 1977) lives and works in Paris, Texas. Clem is a graduate from the prestigious Whitney Independent Study Program. During more than a decade in New York, Clem is known for launching the influential artists space The Fifth International, which championed the work of Aaron Curry, Alex Bag, Jonathan Horowitz and others. Clem's work has been exhibited widely in the United States and Europe including Deitch Projects in New York, Dallas Contemporary, and Galerie Almine Rech in Paris. His work is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, The Centre George Pompidou in Paris, and private collections in the United States and Europe.

Kayode Ojo (b. 1990, Cookeville, Tennessee) received a BFA from the School of Visual Arts in 2012. He currently lives and works in New York, NY. Select exhibitions include *The Aviator*, Martos Gallery, New York, NY in 2020; *All of Them Witches*, Deitch, Los Angeles, CA in 2020; *Never Been Kissed*, Praz-Delavallade, Los Angeles, CA in 2020; Art Brussels, Martos Gallery, Brussels, BE in 2019; *Horology*, Jack Hanley Gallery, New York, NY in 2019; *Equilibrium*, Martos Gallery, New York, NY in 2018; *Betrayal*, Galerie Balice Hertling, Paris, France in 2018; *Running on Empty*, And Now, Dallas, TX in 2018; *Zoe Leonard*, *Kayode Ojo*, curated by Laura Hunt, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, NY in 2018; and *Invisible Man*, Martos Gallery, New York, NY in 2017.

Borna Sammak (b. 1986, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) has most recently presented solo projects with McNamara Art Projects, Hong Kong, in 2020, Sadie Coles HQ, London, in 2019, and JTT, New York, NY, in 2018. In the past year Sammak's work was included in exhibitions at Massimo De Carlo in London and South Etna in Montauk curated by Alison Gingeras. His work has also been exhibited at the Marciano Foundation in Los Angeles, the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne, the Yuz Museum in Shanghai and the Astrup Fearnley Museum in Oslo, among others. Sammak lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.