

Akeem Smith, *IT WAS FUN*

Galerie Nordenhake Stockholm is pleased to present *IT WAS FUN*, the first solo exhibition in Scandinavia of the American-Jamaican artist Akeem Smith.

*IT WAS FUN* evokes the closing title card from an old VHS video of Akeem Smith's archive. This phrase marks the conclusion of a long night documented at the Dancehall. In its wake, a group of friends gather in front of the camera's rolling credits to reminisce about the evening's love affairs and commemorate their youthful bodies in celebration. This sentimental recollection blankets this exhibition, gaining complexity as the reverberation of sound bites from funerals, intimate recordings of therapy sessions, and flashing digital ads for social gatherings spill and bleed into one unadulterated orchestration of intergenerational exchange.

This exhibition includes important video and sculptural pieces from the artist's celebrated body of work *No Gyal Can Test*, which stem from Smith's extensive photo and video archive entrusted to him by family, friends, and key figures of the Jamaican dancehall community, and assembled over more than a decade. This archival material has been organized, restored and preserved by the artist, as a means to safeguard its subject's sacred integrity.

For this exhibition, Smith has created new works from his ongoing series *Black Queen* in which he uses old Dancehall party fliers and archival documentation from various Caribbean party scenes. These elements are framed by architectural remnants of depreciating social spaces from the Caribbean/African diaspora. The corroding substrates function as frames, fortifying individual ephemera which he has carefully integrated into the overall constructs.

The artist is also debuting additional works from a brand-new series of sculptures. Consisting of an alchemy of wrought iron limbs and legs, dissected from salvaged furniture and reanimated into free-standing minimalist forms, these works hover precariously in the round and embody Smith's deepened exploration in framing as they support and enclose vintage photographs of the artist's collection.

All of these works further Akeem Smith's interest in the anthropology of the archive, image making, and vernacular architecture; and question what social and political implications arise with the migration and transformation of these expressive materials.

The sentence *IT WAS FUN* could function as an emblem of the practice of Akeem Smith, whose work revolves around social archives, and seeks to render a once exuberant past present.

Akeem Smith was born in Brooklyn, NY, in 1991. He studied Costume Design at Columbia College, Chicago and Textile Development at the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York. Smith was awarded the Lafayette Anticipations' production grant, at Paris+ par Art Basel 2022. Recent exhibition venues of note include Canadian Centre for Architecture, Québec, Les Rencontres de la photographie, Arles (2022), Luma Westbau, Zürich, Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement 2021, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva (both 2021), and Red Bull Arts, Detroit and New York (2020).

Opening: March 30, 17.00 – 20.00

Exhibition period: March 30 – May 6, 2023

Opening hours: Tuesday – Friday 11.00 – 18.00, Saturday 12.00 – 16.00

Upcoming exhibition: **Sarah Crowner**, *Spring*, May 13 – June 22, 2023