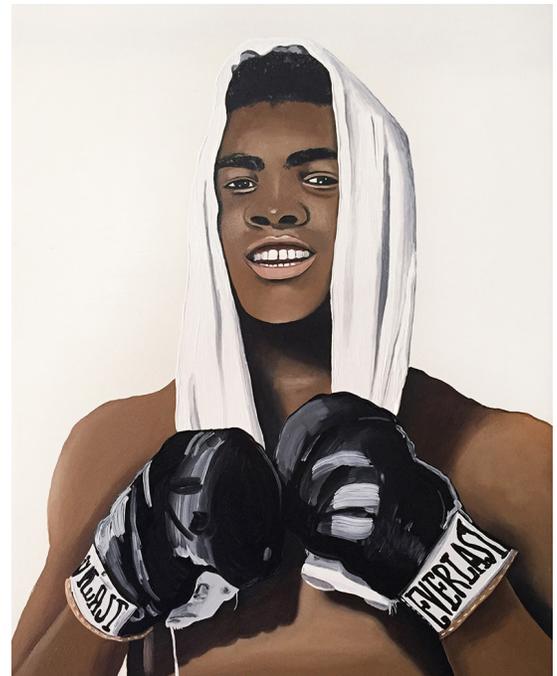

GREATEST OF ALL TIME
A TRIBUTE TO MUHAMMAD ALI

JANUARY 5–FEBRUARY 4, 2017

OPENING RECEPTION:
Thursday, January 5, 2017



Libby Black
Muhammad Ali, 2016
Oil on panel
10 x 8 inches

Joshua Liner Gallery presents GOAT (Greatest of All Time): A Tribute to Muhammad Ali, a group exhibition devoted to the late great icon. Ali's polarizing influences as sportsman and pop cultural idol are explored in this curated exhibition, celebrating him as not only a spellbinding inspiration within the sports arena, but as a charming rebel whose magnetism both inside and out of the ring has left a lasting impact. Arguably the "Greatest of All Time," Ali has been an inspiration since his rise to prominence in the 1960s as a star athlete, and later as one of the most recognized personalities of the twentieth century.

The centerpiece for this exhibition is a series of rare ink on paper works created by Ali during the final years of his life. This collection of work from Ali is exhibited with work by Andy Warhol, as well as numerous contemporary artists including Aaron Johnson, Alfred Steiner, Dapper Bruce Lafitte, Hilary Pecis, Kris Kuksi, Libby Black, Mark Mulroney, Michael Kagan, Tony Curanaj, Wayne White, and a wallpaper installation from Brooklyn-based company Flavor Paper. An opening reception for GOAT will take place Thursday, January 5, 2017, and will be on view for the month that includes the fighter's birthday, closing February 4. Known to so many as a force to be reckoned with who captivated audiences with a fierce self-confidence, it is perhaps less known that the champ possessed a highly creative side. From spoken word poetry to acting on screen and stage, Ali's artistic pursuits covered a

broad scope, that included drawing. A series of five ink drawings of boxing rings by Ali will be on view, and will be accompanied by work from the supporting artists, many of which were produced specifically for this exhibition.

Elaborating on the simple iconic concept of the boxing ring and surrounding audience, Bruce Davenport Jr, now known as Dapper Bruce Lafitte's large scale work on paper presents a map of Ali's pivotal moments in the ring. Taking on a Western Gothic religious visual structure, with a central image framed by smaller narrative scenes, the work strengthens Ali as an icon.

Continuing to memorialize the champ through narrative portraiture, Michael Kagan's recreation of a shot taken of Ali and Joe Frazier's historic fight—the "Thrilla in Manila"—depicts a dramatic black and white rendering of a photograph of the momentous sporting event. The image, which depicts Ali mid swing, possesses an intense dynamism illuminating the sheer strength of the boxer and his adept ability. The captivating strength of the heavyweight champion is equally illuminated in Alfred Steiner's retro reflective screen print of Ali towering over a defeated Sonny Liston. Appropriated from Neil Leifer's iconic photograph, the boxers are displayed in a triangular frame, a subtle religious reference to the holy trinity. Flash photography on the work illuminates the image of Ali, allowing the viewer to assume the position of the audience at the fight, engulfed in exploding flash bulbs. In the same vein, Aaron Johnson will present two new works depicting fight scenes between Ali and his opponent. Johnson's raw and visceral approach to painting captures the magnitude and brutality of the boxing ring, while gawking faces loom in the surrounding crowd.

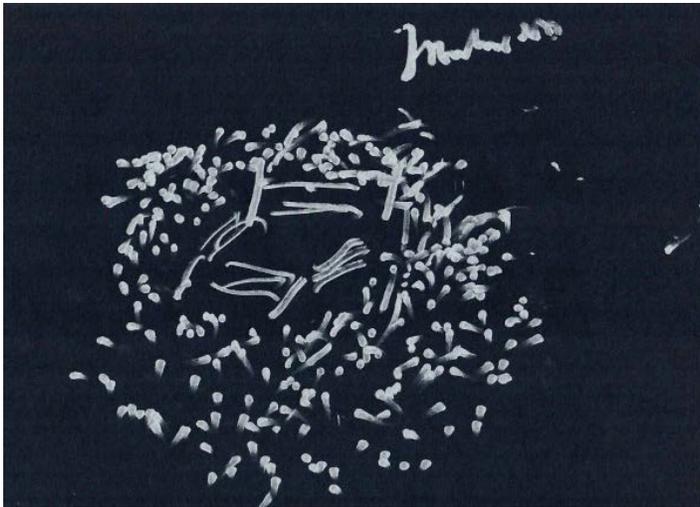
In contrast to the palpable action of Kagan, Johnson, and Steiner's work, Mark Mulroney and Libby Black present intimate, stationary portraits of the sportsman. Mulroney's black and white portrait of Ali is powerfully contrasted with cartoonish imagery, creating an intriguing tension. In Black's portrait, a young Cassius Clay wearing boxing gloves and pulling a sweat towel over his head beams back at the viewer with a charismatic smile. Keeping in line with Black's primary interest in examining inanimate objects and their ability to reveal glimpses of identity, Black will also present a handmade paper and acrylic replica of a punching bag, an object that is as ubiquitous with boxing as its most celebrated champion. Also working with sculpture, Kris Kuksi will present a new petite wall ornament centered on boxing gloves, further exploring the symbolism surrounding Ali. Continuing inanimate representations of Ali's influence, Hilary Pecis paints a sensitive scene of a memorial built in the wake of his death. A flood of candles, flowers, flags, pictures, cards and sports memorabilia congregate outside the Ali Center in his hometown of Louisville, KY.

Other artists commemorate the vociferous fighter through adaptation of memorable quotes. Tony Curanaj will present two new oil on panel works evoking Ali's most recognized quote "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee." A poetic reference to the boxer's biting punch yet graceful skill as an athlete, Curanaj illustrates the renowned phrase through two realist renderings of a butterfly and a bee framed by three hairline borders around each piece—a subtle reference to the aerial view of the boxing ring. Following suit, Wayne White will exhibit a new word painting with the quote "SHOOK UP THE WORLD! I SHOOK UP THE WORLD!" a heartwarming reminder of the profound impact Ali had during his lifetime, and after.

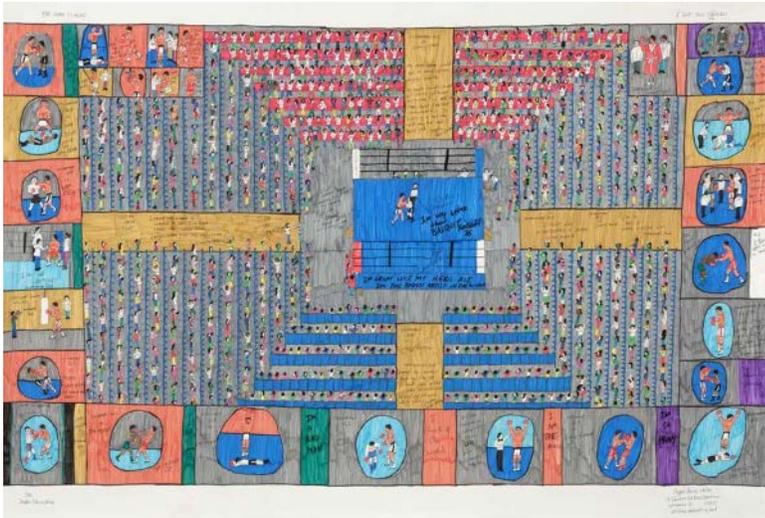
Lastly, in conjunction with The Warhol Foundation, Brooklyn based wallpaper company Flavor Paper will present a newly designed wallpaper featuring Andy Warhol's Muhammad Ali. The wallpaper will be displayed, along with an unpublished print of Ali's fist from Warhol's Muhammad Ali portfolio.

Contact

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Muhammad Ali
Untitled (Boxing Ring), 2015
Ink on paper
9 x 12 inches



Dapper Bruce Lafitte
I'm Way Better than Basquit Sure Nuff I, 2015
Ink on paper
42 x 62 inches



Aaron Johnson
Knock Out Punch, 2016
Acrylic on paper
15 x 19 inches