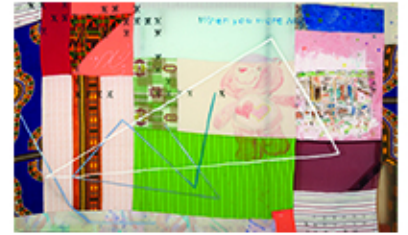


‘Tameka Norris: Too Good for You (Introducing Meka Jean)’ at Lombard Freid

BY *Alexandra Pechman* POSTED 07/30/14



Tameka Norris, *How to Write a Cursive X*, 2014, acrylic and oil on fabric.

COURTESY LOMBARD FREID.

New York

New Orleans–based artist Tameka Norris took a brassy, unflinching look at her post-Katrina city in this show punctuated by videos addressing reality TV, music videos, and M.F.A. culture.

Playing on one screen was a series of five “confessionals” about the Yale School of Art, which Norris attended. Dedicated to the artist’s first, second, third, and fourth semesters and graduation, the videos feature Norris playing a highly caricatured version of an art student.

Seemingly inspired by Jayson Musson’s “ART THOUGHTZ” videos, Norris’s works are self-consciously less charming than Musson’s and at times intentionally grating. “Sooooo, it’s my first semester here, at the Yale School of Art,” Norris, dressed in hipster glasses and a green beanie, drawls in a valley-girl accent in her video *My First Semester: Yale School of Art (2010–12)*. “Aaaaand so faaar, Ill’m not really sure what I’m doing here.” In a monologue littered with the word “like,” she unleashes a nearly ten-minute-long stream of complaints. Halfway through, she lights a joint and gets distracted by a Drake song playing in the background. Norris has built her reputation by inserting herself into art-historical narratives that don’t consider the black experience. She provokes audiences by satirizing the hubris of M.F.A. candidates, alternately emphasizing and suppressing her identity as a black artist.

Also on view were paintings on fabric depicting destroyed places, products, and tribal imagery—all patched together. But the main attraction was *Too Good for You (2014)*. In this faux music video blaring through the gallery, the artist romps around a Laundromat dressed in a Yale sweatshirt and a tutu, amid languorous shots of washing machines. Interspersed are similarly ridiculous scenes of Norris writhing around clothed in a shower or trying on garments. Such glamorization of the quotidian calls attention to the artist’s mostly nonsense lyrics, full of bravado—“I want you to know, to know, to know”—that remains vague. Norris, who aspired to be a rapper before her career as an artist, cunningly packages her critique: the song is catchy, too.

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