



**EJ Hill:** *The Necessary Reconditioning of the Highly Deserving*

March 18—April 29, 2017

Reception: Saturday, March 18, 5—8PM

Location: 3006 W 7TH ST STE 220 Los Angeles CA 90005

Exhibition Hours: Wednesday—Saturday, 12–6PM and by appointment

Commonwealth and Council presents “The Necessary Reconditioning of the Highly Deserving,” an exhibition of new work by EJ Hill. The imagery of this exhibition— mountains, clouds, ascensions—insists on the importance of representations of marginalized bodies in places of elevation. We find here a telling of the story of Blackness with light and affirmation; not as a denial of the pain of existence, but as an approach for addressing and healing it. A counterpoint to the traumatizing images that have become so ubiquitous in our current news cycle, it is a “queering” of this image. To productively and joyously reframe this paradigm is itself a radical act.

All bodies move through the world; not all bodies move in the same way. What you hold in your body is not what I hold in my body. There is a theory of intergenerational trauma that purports that the violence inflicted on ancestors can alter the DNA of their progeny. There are things written into our skin, forced into the blood in our veins, scratched into our cells. In a multifaceted practice, Hill explores the conditions of his reality, of his moving through the world. Here, art is a gesture of self-affirmation and an assumption of presence in spaces where that physicality may not be recognized or welcomed. It is a visual gesture to write new ways of being; the transference and preservation of an experience of being lifted to heights, of being firmly rooted.

In this installation featuring sculptures and painting, the emotionally demanding tenor of Hill’s performance practice retains a presence, quietly but with the same potency. There is a catharsis, an acceptance of the emotional highs and lows of a life lived. Hill offers the breadth of an experience, one that can include trauma and pain, as well as moments of breathtaking exaltation and sublimation, rootedness and establishment. We look up for affirmations. We swing up into the air to find glimpses of ourselves. We find structures at last in place that allow us to ascend. The poetic justice of the human experience is what is at stake here. Urgency and violence, yes, but triumphs and tenderness too.

—Ana Iwataki



EJ Hill is an artist living and working in Los Angeles. Recent exhibitions include: Future Generation Art Prize 2017, PinchukArtCentre, Kiev; "Tenses: Artists in Residence 2015-2016," The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; "Slow Dance," with Matt Austin, ACRE Projects, Chicago; "Bloody Red Sun of Fantastic L.A.," PIASA, Paris. Forthcoming exhibitions include: Human Resources, Los Angeles and Future Generation Art Prize 2017, Venice Biennale, Venice. Performances include the Grace Exhibition Space, Brooklyn; LAXART at Art Los Angeles Contemporary; the Chicago Cultural Center, SOMArts, San Francisco; among others. This is his third exhibition with Commonwealth and Council. Hill received his MFA from University of California, Los Angeles and BFA from Columbia College, Chicago.