



PRESS RELEASE

Rindon Johnson

Well Covered

March 17 – April 21, 2018

Opening Reception

Saturday, March 17

6 – 9 pm

"We are fashioned creatures, but half made up."

- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818)



AAILA is pleased to present *Well Covered*, an exhibition of new works by Rindon Johnson. By entering into the same systems which they scrutinize, Johnson asks: Who gets to control products and bodies as they circulate over time and place?

In a series of leather wall works, Johnson stains and ages cow hides, tanning them with Vaseline. As byproducts of noxious, omnipresent industries, leather and vaseline are imbued with acts of transformation and domination. Johnson adds additional layers of violence, the hides acting as both portrait and experiment. The hides presented here have been aging in Los Angeles for the last two months and reflect their new urban environment as much as their place of origin. There is a non-consensual becoming as the hides face the elements and the will of the artist and are even further alienated from their origins.

In the sculptural works, this forced becoming merges with questions of function and value as the materials take the shape of furniture that cannot be used and totems that cannot be worshiped. In the accompanying sound piece, *Why, why. Tell them it's just HUMAN nature* (2018), the echo of Vaseline being applied to the hides is isolated and amplified, the underlying brutality of the relationship between human and cow slapped onto the surface.

Questions about circulation and indigeneity converge in *It is April (Well, Covered)* (2018). With its distinctive scent, eucalyptus (modern Latin, from Greek *eu* 'well' + *kaluptos* 'covered') signals *home* for the artist, a native Californian. This association belies a history of transplantation and whether the arrival of eucalyptus was beneficial or invasive remains a point of contention. If one arrived in 1800, would they not be assimilated by 2018? Introducing human bodies and blatantly addressing skin color, the video projection echoes this precarity and heightens the urgency of the questions: Who is from where, when? When is one held, when is one pushed? Are the hands that hold benevolent or violent?

Rindon Johnson (b. 1990, San Francisco, United States) lives and works in New York and Berlin. Johnson is a multidisciplinary artist and writer whose mediums include sculpture, video, photography, painting, and poetry. Solo and group exhibitions have been held at The Java Project, Brooklyn; Beacon, Sacramento; The Museum of Human Achievement, Austin; AAILA, Los Angeles; S.A.L.T.S, Basel; Duve, Berlin, and others.