

## COALMINE – RAUM FÜR FOTOGRAFIE

**James Bantone**

**He Said, They Said**

**20.11.2020 – 30.1.2021**

We are delighted to present the solo exhibition by James Bantone (b.1992, lives and works in Geneva and Zurich) entitled *He Said, They Said*.

Who says what and how it is said is at the core of James Bantone's artistic practice. He investigates the cultural codes of bodies and languages, performativity and the different medial forms of self-representation. Through photography, video and sculpture, the artist occupies the space between language, gender and origin, creating a productive space to discuss questions of belonging and identity. Important sources for his works include: personal experiences, fictive stories and social media, specifically the abundant world of memes. Platforms such as TikTok and Instagram can be places where pop cultural phenomena are shared and adapted beyond the mainstream, creating alternative forms of community. James Bantone cites found gestures, interprets reproduces and multiplies them. HIM, for example, a character from the US-American TV series "Powerpuff Girls", is sketched as a transgender devil. James Bantone, who identifies himself as queer and Black, subverts these stereotypical, heteronormative ascriptions by not negating them, but taking them up and attributing them with positive connotations.

In the exhibition space of the Coalmine, James Bantone makes use of the barbershop as a place of social gathering and communication, but also as a 'masculine' defined space; becoming the starting point for his reflection on social attributions and strategies of refusal. Through an alter ego and his images, which the visitors can't escape, the artist creates his own space of possibility, where insistence and repetition become productive methods for questioning the social conditions of the construction of identity, the perception of the self and of the Other.

The exhibition is generously supported by HEAD–Genève. Generous in-kind sponsoring by Glas + Spiegel, Niederer AG, Illnau. Further in-kind sponsoring by Remo Eyer Fine Art Print, Zürich.

**James Bantone** graduated from Zurich University of the Arts and is currently enrolled in the Work.Master program at HEAD, Geneva. In 2019, he had a solo exhibition entitled IM LIVIN at Dynamo Project Room 13 in Zurich. Current group exhibitions include: Kiefer Hablitzel/Göhner Kunstpreis 2020, Kunsthaus Langenthal (upcoming); *Haunted House*, Swiss Institute, New York (2020); Plattform20, Kunsthalle Fribourg (2020); 5 Academies: European Photography Award, Cité internationale des Arts, Paris (2019); *Camp Fires*, UV Studios, Buenos Aires (2019); *Goodbye Plastic*, Longtang, Zurich (2019); *Nouveaux Sacrés*, Voiture 14, Marseille (2019).