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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Fahamu Pecou: If Heaven Had Heights

Exhibition Dates: April 1–June 10, 2023
Opening Reception: Saturday, April 1 from 5–8 pm
Gallery Location: 434 Julia Street, New Orleans, LA 70130
Hours: Tuesday–Saturday, 10 am–5 pm
Contact Info: 504.522.1999; www.arthurrorgallery.com

The Arthur Roger Gallery is proud to present Fahamu Pecou's latest exhibition, *If Heaven Had Heights*, showcasing the artist's collection of paintings, drawings, and fetish objects. The exhibit will be held at Arthur Roger@434, located at 434 Julia Street in New Orleans from April 1st to June 10th, 2023. An opening reception with the artist will be held on Saturday, April 1st from 5–8 pm.

The exhibition focuses on the intersection between the concept of heaven and rebellion through Black anti-conformity. Pecou's work centers on the question, "How does one get to Heaven?" as he explores the typically negative associations of "saggin" fashion and reimagines it as a symbol of aspiration, hope, and possibility. Through his use of exaggerated layers of boxers, shorts, and jeans, Pecou re-contextualizes sagging as a crucial element in establishing autonomy and agency—particularly amongst the powerless. He also incorporates the iconic silhouette of the Jordan 1 shoe to suggest flight and explore the recurring theme of flight in the Black American imagination. These depictions of Jordans as not merely fashion statements, but powerful declarations of independence.

The exhibition highlights how Black dissidence inherently finds ways to trouble and agitate dominant society while also expanding on the realms of creativity and self-expression. Hip-hop culture is one of the most consistently transgressive and transformative methodologies for this type of resistance, and the exhibition explores its role in cultural criticism as old as the art form itself. Pecou's work illustrates that for Black bodies, rebellion takes a different form, confronting death directly. The artist portrays that living in a state of near-death, Black individuals are intimately familiar with death's inevitability, making it less frightening. Rebellion, therefore, is a willingness to risk everything, even one's own life, to create a world of your own making.

The exhibition is a must-see for anyone interested in contemporary art, hip-hop culture, and Black anti-conformity.

Pecou earned his BFA at the Atlanta College of Art in 1997 and a Ph.D. from Emory University in 2018. Pecou's work is exhibited globally and he lectures at colleges and universities worldwide. Dr. Pecou developed a narrative-based arts curriculum, (ad)Vantage Point, focused on Black male youth. Pecou's work is held in private and public national and international collections, including the Smithsonian National Museum of African American Art and Culture, Societe Generale (Paris), Nasher Museum at Duke University, The High Museum of Art, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Seattle Art Museum, Paul R. Jones Collection, Clark Atlanta University Art Collection and Museum of Contemporary Art Georgia. He has been the recipient of numerous awards, including the 2016 Joan Mitchell Foundation "Painters and Sculptors" Award, the Georgia awardee for the 2020 South Arts Prize, and one of six artists selected for Emory University's groundbreaking Arts & Social Justice Fellowship in 2020. His work has also been featured in films and television shows such as HBO's *Between the World and Me* and in publications like *Atlanta Magazine* and Hanif Abdurraqib's poetry collection, *A Fortune for Your Disaster*.

For more information please contact the Arthur Roger Gallery at 504.522.1999 or visit our website at arthurrorgallery.com.



Fahamu Pecou | *Untitled*, 2023 | Acrylic on canvas | 80 x 54 inches