

FORT GANSEVOORT

Ashley Teamer

Rated Rookie

Opening On:

Thursday, May 3, 6 – 8 PM

May 3, – June 16, 2018



Fort Gansevoort presents *Rated Rookie*, the gallery's first exhibition featuring the artwork of New Orleans, Louisiana-based artist, Ashley Teamer. Opening on May 3rd, the exhibition features collage and painting.

Teamer is an abstract painter, at times using collage as her paint. She was brought to the subject of basketball while searching for a source for her abstractions, one that would be rich with recognizable symbols and act as abstract forms. Basketball shoes were her first steps into a world of sports and more specifically basketball imagery, now consuming her practice. Even when placed into a realm of abstraction, these shapes and figures successfully draw the viewer in through the use of a visual language that is widely spoken and revered.

Not unlike most professional fields, sports and specifically basketball prove to be one of much gender imbalances. Through the use of both WNBA and men's sports cards as her medium, Teamer creates an otherworldly space where women and men can compete on the same courts and be equally represented in the sports conversation. It is not Teamer's goal to put female athletes on a pedestal; instead her sports fanatical spaces create grounds for a mythical world where all genders are discussed using a common language and not one built on comparisons. Yet, given the sizeable history of imbalance, the women in this world of sports must be pushed to the forefront in order to be considered equal. The women of Teamer's collages are visually placed in the foreground while echoes of the male players' cards fall into the background into a supportive roll appearing almost as abstract patterned wallpaper.

Countless repeats of identical male player cards act as time capsules of a mere moment in sports history where a rookie player was victim to overvaluation and speculation by card collectors. Collectors stockpiled sought after Rookie Cards that were thought to be rare collectibles, not knowing that the card manufacturers were overproducing these same cards making them virtually worthless. Through the laws of oversupply and dried up demand, Teamer has been left with a world of material to transform.

The faces found on WNBA trading cards depict the female players' finest moments of athleticism, these same faces are often difficult to discern from expressions of pain and agony. These women's expressions have derived new meaning for Teamer, now acting as reflections of the artist's anguish caused by the United States' current political state. The main subject of Teamer's collages and the faces to which these anguished expressions belong are women of color, people who are strongly affected by both gender and race inequality.

In the piece entitled, *Who Am I*, a suffering expression is clearly emphasized. Two large hands cradle the small fractured cutouts of sports cards. These cutouts lead the eye upwards with the help of the many players' fully extended arms; all culminating at the top where the fragments lead into a single blown-up face clearly portraying a moment of full bodily distress.

In addition to the collages, the exhibition includes paintings. These paintings continue the use of sports imagery as a medium, through a continued use of collage work and/or figurative painting. Teamer's figures exist in an abstracted realm of bright colors, soft edges and curved shapes; exemplifying both her skilled use of figures as an abstract practice and her free-form use of paint.

Ashley Teamer was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. Her work explores the complexities of black femininity through painting, collage, and animation. In both her visual and curatorial work, Teamer uses the object to inform and transform the gallery space. She has been an Artist-in-Residence at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, ACRE, and Ox-Bow School of Art and Artist Residency. Teamer presented a solo show Sneaker Boy Dreams at 4th Ward Project Space in Chicago. She is currently an artist-in-residence at the Joan Mitchell Center in New Orleans, LA.