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## Rare Exhibition of David Hammons's Basketball, Kool-Aid Works Comes to New York



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Installation view of David Hammons's current exhibition at Nahmad Contemporary.  
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Hammons's works made using basketballs and Kool-Aid will form the basis of a survey opening this Saturday at **Nahmad Contemporary**, a gallery on New York's Upper East Side. Though works from both series have been included in various Hammons exhibitions worldwide, it is unusual to see either body of work to be given the spotlight in this way. Seven works from the "Basketball" series (1995–2012) and 10 from the "Kool-Aid" series (2003–12) will be on view.

New York is experiencing an unprecedented convergence of **David Hammons** shows, with a **survey of the artist's body prints** on view at the Drawing Center and his much-anticipated **monumental sculpture** to be officially unveiled next month, steps from the Whitney Museum. Now, these two showings will be joined by a third exhibition dedicated to Hammons, shining a light on two series that have never before been surveyed in-depth.

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"I think he's one of the most important living artists—highly influential, and so diverse" in his output, Joseph Nahmad, the gallery's founder, said in an interview. "I always thought the basketball and Kool-Aid drawings were among his most important works, and there'd never been an exhibition dedicated to either of those series. We thought they would really work in dialogue."

To assemble the show, the gallery relied heavily on loans, many of which were difficult to secure. "It was a tough task obtaining the loans, and we were able to get some of the top examples from private collections," Nahmad said.

For the "Basketball" works, Hammons bounced basketballs against dirt sourced from New York's Harlem neighborhood and dribbled it against a paper, creating swirling forms that resemble Abstract Expressionist compositions. Each framed piece of paper is juxtaposed with an object of resonance—*Traveling* (2002), for instance, conceals a suitcase, a reference to a basketball

violation of the same name.

The "Kool-Aid" works are also abstractions that belie clever games with perceptions of their viewers. Produced using the titular flavored drink mix, these bursts of color are covered with writing in Japanese done by the artist's wife. (When translated, these texts explain how to make Kool-Aid.) Some of these works are accompanied by veils that can be peeled back by the viewer to view them.

"He plays on the art market and the commodification of art," said Michelle Molokotos, director of the gallery, adding that Hammons is "denying viewers the opportunity to see what's behind."

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