



M CONTEMPORARY ART PRESENTS

RASHAUN RUCKER

## AMERICAN ORNITHOLOGY

OCTOBER 25 - NOVEMBER 19, 2019

RECEPTION FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 6 - 9 PM

205 EAST 9 MILE, FERNDALE, MI



Image: Rashaun Rucker, *East Side Aviary*, graphite on paper, 30 x 22 inches.

Detroit, MI — M Contemporary Art is pleased to announce ***American Ornithology***, a solo exhibition of drawings by **Rashaun Rucker**, opening **October 25, 2019**, and running through **November 16, 2019**. The title of the exhibition comes from his eponymous series, which compares the life of a creature many of us see every day — the Rock Pigeon — to the identity and, in many ways, stereotypes of black men in America.

Europeans introduced pigeons to North America in the 1600s, at approximately the same time slavery came to the continent. The Rock Pigeon is now commonly found in American cities, occupying the streets. National Geographic has described the Rock Pigeon as being gregarious and forming large flocks; it feeds on handouts and grains during the day. This is similar to the way many people view black men as populating urban landscapes and living off social assistances (the system).

*“These images I’ve created are intended to communicate why we, as black men, often don’t ‘fly’ despite possessing the ability to transcend our circumstances. They paint a picture of how, most of the time, the damaging environment in which we have been placed by generational systemic oppressions leads to a reluctant contentment instead of being a fleeting station in life.”* -Rashaun Rucker

Rashaun Rucker’s art examines social and cultural issues in America, with a particular focus on human rights, mental illness, the black experience, and the influence of inequality. Rucker’s work has always dealt with social ills, which he sees as partly due to his training and experience as a journalist. He sees it as his job to show people, as James Baldwin once put it, what they don’t see. These social and

cultural issues are of special concern in the wake of Detroit's rebirth post-bankruptcy. Even as parts of the city see huge positive changes, it still struggles with poverty, gentrification, homelessness, the achievement gap, and under-employment.

Rashaun Rucker is a product of North Carolina Central University and Marygrove College. He makes photographs, prints and drawings and has won more than 40 national and state awards for his work. In 2008 Rucker became the first African American to win Michigan Press Photographer of the Year. He also won a national Emmy Award in 2008 for documentary photography on pit bull culture. Rucker was a Maynard Fellow at Harvard in 2009 and a Hearst visiting professional in the journalism department at UNC-Chapel Hill in 2013. In 2014 Rucker was awarded an artist residency at the Red Bull House of Art. In 2016 Rucker was honored as a Modern Man by Black Enterprise magazine. In 2017 Rucker created the original artwork for the critically acclaimed documentary "12 and Clairmount." In 2019 his work was featured HBO's "Random Acts of Flyness" and "Native Son." Rucker's work is represented in numerous public and private collections. Rucker was recently named a 2019 Kresge Arts Visual Arts Fellow. *American Ornithology* is Rashaun Rucker's first solo exhibition at M Contemporary Art.

Opened in Ferndale in early 2018, M Contemporary Art primarily represents emerging and established Detroit-based artists whose work spans from painting and sculpture, to photography and mixed-media. Founded by Melannie Chard, a Michigan native who gained experience in client and business development in New York City, the gallery offers local and national clients access to some of the city's most promising artistic voices.

To learn more about Rashaun Rucker, visit [rashaunrucker.com](http://rashaunrucker.com).

To learn more about M Contemporary Art, visit [mcontemporaryart.com](http://mcontemporaryart.com).

*American Ornithology*, by Rashaun Rucker  
October 25 - November 16, 2019  
Opening reception: October 25, 2019, 6 - 9PM  
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