

Iona ROZEAL brown



no one's ever gonna love you, so don't wonder

February 28 - March 29, Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art, 37 West 57th Street

introducing...THE HOUSE OF BANDO

March 5 - April 27, Salon 94 Freemans, One Freeman Alley

Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art and Salon 94 Freemans are pleased to collaborate on exhibitions featuring artist Iona ROZEAL brown, in her first solo shows with each. The galleries coincided their shows to highlight brown's multiple mediums and expansive imagination. Both bodies of work represent chapters in the artist's ongoing myth "*on spirit children and the like*," an ever-expanding pantheon of other-worldly, gender-unspecific, cross-cultural spirits.

introducing...THE HOUSE OF BANDO, at Salon 94 Freemans is comprised of a series of painted portraits of Benny and Javier Ninja, of the Legendary House of Ninja, along with Monstah Black. The performers were all featured in "*the battle of yestermore*," the artist's critically lauded commission at the 2011 Performa festival. The three formed the House of Bando with brown as homage to Bando Tamasaboro, the famed female impersonator or *onnagata* of the Kabuki stage. The exhibited paintings are derived from photos taken for an upcoming collaboration with photographer Joshua Cogan and, as installed, reflect the artist's own take on Byzantine iconography.

Six new paintings, including a diptych measuring five by eight feet, will be featured at Edward Tyler Nahem Fine Art. The new works reflect brown's continued fascination with the *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints of late-Edo period Japan, in particular the works of 19th century printmaker Kitagawa Utamaro, who was widely considered as the greatest exponent of this style of woodblock prints. Brown referenced the artist and his work in her earlier *a³ blackface* series. The Japanese tradition of erotic art, *Shunga*, continues to play a strong role in brown's work with intimacy emphasized over ostentation in the imagery. Titles of the works are loosely based on verses of the *Song of Solomon* as well as hip-hop rhymes. Additionally, the artist incorporates a haiku poem on the back of each.

Brown also mines the rich cross-cultural territory of the *ganguro*, a subculture of Japanese adolescents that sports tanned skin, bright makeup, blonde wigs, and gold chains, in order to model themselves after the stereotypical African-American hip-hop look—the word *ganguro* translates literally to "blackface." Luxury accessories like strands of pearls and oversized gold jewelry are featured throughout brown's compositions, on display with overlaid irregular patterns and painterly drips on raw woodgrain in brown's signature approach to figuration.

Iona ROZEAL brown is a native of Washington, DC and a graduate of the San Francisco Art Institute and Yale University. In addition to her Performa commission, the artist has been featured in solo exhibitions at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington DC; MoCA Detroit, MoCA Cleveland; and the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford. She currently lives and works in Brooklyn. Brown's work is in the permanent collections of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; The New Museum of Contemporary Art, NY; The Studio Museum, NY; Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford; and Yale University, New Haven, among others.