



ARTFORUM



View of "Kayode Ojo: Half-Life," 2023.

Washington, DC
Kayode Ojo
VON AMMON CO
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TERI HENDERSON | FEB 2023

Kayode Ojo's "Half-Life," the artist's first solo outing in Washington, DC, is a haunting and deeply romantic presentation that features sixteen new sculptures comprising an assortment of luxe-looking goods, from vintage cameras and shiny handcuffs to beaded handbags and a pair of rhinestone boots atop a mirrored pedestal. Yet despite the factory-fresh sheen of his materials, the show is suffused with a deathly air—the artist has turned the gallery into a funereal showroom.

Ojo's hand is surgical and exacting. His art, rife with unblemished, reflective surfaces, achieves a clean and precise symmetry. Though we are not invited to touch, the work is very much about seeing and being seen. While the show is starkly monochromatic—black leather, sparkling glass, silvery chains, polished steel—flashes of color crop up here and there, as we see in the gilded shimmer of a calculator from CB2, the yellow cover of Hilton Als's essay collection *White Girls* (2013), and a brown bottle of Virginia Black American Whiskey, all of which are part of the sculpture *Half-Life 16*, 2023. The work's material list reads like an absurdist poem: ZARA MLTRY JMPST 09, Cymax Business 29.53" wide genuine leather foldable accent lounge chair (white), Simplee Apparel women's long sleeve fluffy faux-fur warm coat, The Dreidel Company steel metal play handcuffs pretend police hero cops Halloween dress-up, and so on. It is an excess of fast-fashion items, cheap things made to appear expensive—an opulence that is more gold-plated than genuine gold.

The melancholy embedded in Ojo's art is palpable as you move through the show, but there's also a sense of exuberance, as if one is dancing at the end of some fabulous—and final—party. "Half-Life" offers up an elegant ache, an exhibition of gleaming objects that reflect the strange conditions of our dire present.