



Devin Mays
Everything is Everything
April 22 - June 3

Q: How are you?

A: Everything is everything.

Regards,

The work of Devin Mays hovers. Its presence is undeniable, its materiality direct, and yet it provokes a feeling of unsureness. Less a question of how did this get here, or why is it here, but rather a suspicious consideration of placement and belonging. His work seems to have been made for someplace else, someplace like the places we know, but its present state suggests that the rules that govern these objects and images have been modified. Through an allowance for subtle distortions, the works that comprise *Everything is Everything* establish this sense of dislocation, while reenforcing the necessary entwinement of doubt with belief. An enlarged, burning candle sits upon the floor, its scale out of proportion with how we are accustomed to encountering candles. A violently altered basketball, smashed out of any possibility for use as it was intended, hangs high on a wall. The strange and common qualities of a photographed interior, rife with the results of choices that simultaneously resonate as both odd and obvious. We presume to know where to place things, how to settle them either permanently or temporarily, but how do we reconcile purpose and outcome when someone else's attempts to place seem so misfitting?

By mining his own familial, cultural, spiritual, and technical traditions, Mays uncovers and complicates the ways through which we are meant to come to understand ourselves subjectively. We may find stability and peace through enacting traditions by lighting a candle, playing basketball, or being in the home of a close family member, but when such notions commingle with the material reality of Devin Mays' work, acts of observance give way to acts of observation, instigating a particular kind of confusion. We may believe everything is everything, and we may watch it become nothing. Whether the work hovers to remain in between these states, or operates as a means of connecting them, it contends with experiences of being overwhelmed with possibilities, the total emptiness of absolute dismissal, and whatever points fall within the fields and trajectories that these poles of faith and perception create.

Devin Mays is an artist living in Chicago. Recent exhibitions and performances at DePaul Art Museum, Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; Logan Center for the Arts, Chicago; Nahmad Projects, London. He received his B.B.A from Howard University, and his MFA from the University of Chicago in 2016. This is his first solo exhibition in Chicago.