

Boot/leg

Akinola Davies Jr

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High end brands are globally recognised symbols of meaning within social identity, and thus are a direct mode of instant visual communication, between the individual and the world.

As a result, they have become defining symbols of affiliation and status. This is particularly true of working class communities where brands enjoy widespread representation within the most liminal of spaces, and unintended of communities.

Davies's work explores the conversation of meaning and context, and investigates whether luxury items is perceived as authentic or bootleg when it's removed of intended context. He comments that historically, once luxury brands have been displayed within these communities, they gain social poignancy. The community creates them as relevant markers of identity and projected aspiration.

Not only the adoption of iconic, expensive brands but also of other accessories through marginalised, often poor communities is an unacknowledged conduit through which these styles gain credence and legitimacy in popular culture. *Boot/leg* asks what is real and fake within the stratified layers between the economically disenfranchised and the economically empowered, when each wears the same product as an outward expression of their identity?

In two newly produced video works, Akinola Davies Jr examines through portraiture the role which items have as social signifiers and tools of cultural production as their wearers ascribe fashion goods with meanings and symbols, thus leading to the constant construction and reproduction of visual narratives and identities. The images have been constructed and presented in the same luxury aesthetic used within the brands' adverts, addressing the interrelation between the real and the fake.

Davies's quest to challenge imagery that is made familiar by the fashion and music industries reflects throughout his practice with a strong focus in portraiture through, video, photography and radio. He lives and works in London.

By Deborah Joyce Holman & Moya DeYoung