

FRIEZE

The Best Shows to See in the UK This Winter

Amid various exhibitions, CONDO returns to the capital after a four-year hiatus to promote international collaboration between galleries

Ari Marcopoulos | 19 JAN 24



Pope.L, *How Much Is That Nigger in the Window a.k.a. Tompkins Square Crawl*, 1991, digital c-print on gold-fibre silk paper, 25 x 38 cm.
Courtesy: © Pope.L and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York

Pope.L / South London Gallery / 21 November 2023 – 11 February 2024

I first heard about Pope.L's work at the 2002 Whitney Biennial, where he had recently embarked on the multi-year performance, *The Great White Way* (2001–09). It was a confounding spectacle: a Black man crawling down Broadway in a Superman costume with a skateboard strapped to his back. I subsequently had the opportunity to hang out with him a few times. Conversations with Pope.L were just as confounding as his work. His words were thought-provoking yet funny, the sound of his laugh often formed an intrinsic part of any debate.

My last encounter with his art was 'Impossible Failures', a joint exhibition with Gordon Matta-Clark at 52 Walker, New York, last year – an aptly titled show for an artist who was dedicated to experimentation no matter the outcome. I was amazed, as I have been with so much of Pope.L's work, by what he was able to do with the simplest of materials: *Vigilance a.k.a. Dust Room* (2023), for instance, employed simple Home Depot products to create a magical scene in which Styrofoam flew around like snow in a blue, wintry light. Ever the trickster, he ensured the piece could be seen only through a small window cut into the side of a dumpster. I could have watched it for eternity. I will greatly miss Pope.L and his startling work.