

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

Nayland Blake's Opening

September 7 – October 19, 2019

Reception: Saturday, September 7, 3:00 to 5:00 PM

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **Nayland Blake's Opening**, the next exhibition in his gallery at 1062 North Orange Grove. The artist's first one-person exhibition in Los Angeles in almost twenty years, it features sculptures that examine the human body as a site where sexual pleasure, aging, and identity intersect. For more than three decades Nayland Blake (b. 1960) has articulated the experiences of someone living on the border of gender and racial identities. "What does it mean to try to leave a record of ambiguity?", they ask. "Can we celebrate the fact that our bodies are porous and permeable?"

Blake has long used costume play to explore these issues. Hanging from the gallery walls are a fuzzy black suit and a sheet of beige leather, both punctured by dozens of large metal grommets, and a spreader bar outfitted with pink-leather ankle cuffs and collar. Nearby, four wall-mounted assemblages, each incorporating a polished mirror and pendulous forms in hand-blown glass, invoke the artist's *Work Station* sculptures of the late 1980s but reinvent them as makeup stations.

A novelty candle given to the artist as a child and cherished for thirty years was the inspiration for a series of small sculptures installed throughout the exhibition. Long before Blake realized the candle was a knockoff of Robert Indiana's work — four interlocked letters spelling out the word *LOVE* — the gift took on a special significance. By revisiting this childhood totem and casting it in bronze and colored wax, Blake hopes to "genuinely make the argument for love and openness in a time when we're being told to close off and shut down."

From September 26 to January 26 the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, will present the first full-scale retrospective of the artist's work, "No Wrong Holes: Thirty Years of Nayland Blake." Organized by Jamillah James and accompanied by a catalogue with newly commissioned essays, reprinted historical texts, and contributions from a number of artists, the exhibition will travel to the MIT List Visual Arts Center in 2020.

Nayland Blake's Opening is on view at 1062 North Orange Grove from September 7 to October 19, 2019, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. For additional information, please contact Cory Nomura at 323-654-1830 or cory@matthewmarks.com.

The next exhibition at 1062 North Orange Grove, **Laura Owens: Books and Tables**, opens October 26.