

# BLUM & POE

Los Angeles, New York, Tokyo

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Sam Durant**

***Iconoclasm***

**Blum & Poe, Los Angeles**

**October 1–November 7, 2020**

September 23, 2020, Los Angeles, CA — Blum & Poe is pleased to present *Iconoclasm*, an exhibition of new work by Los Angeles and Berlin-based artist Sam Durant. For over two decades, Durant has been engaged in an ongoing dialogue with tumultuous and forgotten events of the past, shining a light on these histories to reveal their resonance with broader social, political, and cultural issues. In a new series of graphite works drawn from archival documentation, Durant depicts the intentional and often violent destruction of public monuments. Produced in 2018, this body of work was first exhibited last year at Library Street Collective in Detroit, and is being shown in October 2020 in Los Angeles at a time when monument-removal has become a divisive political debate issue in the lead up to the US General Election. A new electric sign by the artist commemorates the occasion.

The six drawings that compose the exhibition are accompanied by a new two-channel video work made from archival footage of public statues being torn down. Durant slows the speed for a protracted, quiet fall that allows for a reflective experience in processing the wreckage of public symbols. Both the drawings and the video illustrate a wide-ranging arc of monument destruction across nations, cultures, and time periods. Both in and out of their original context, the monuments speak to the specific time and place from which they came, while standing equally as appropriate and applicable to the contemporary situation in which they are exhibited. They speak widely to recurrence and re-occurrence of moments of struggle and resistance in history.

Durant's interest in monuments and memorials began with *Proposal for Monument at Altamont Raceway, Tracy, CA* (1999), referencing the vicious end to the infamous free concert and arguably, the end to an era of upheaval; it continued notably with *Proposal for White and Indian Dead Monument Transpositions* (2005), re-contextualizing memorials to victims of the conquest of North America; and more recently with *Proposal for Public Fountain* (2015), a marble work depicting an anarchist statue being blasted by a police water-canon. In 2017, what has become Durant's most controversial public sculpture, *Scaffold* (2012), was itself protested and ceremonially buried by members of the Dakota people from its installation at the Minnesota Sculpture Garden at Walker Arts Center. Made in the wake of the artist's personal experience of removal of his public sculpture, the *Iconoclasm* body of work develops the artist's, as well as our own, understanding of the power of symbols.

Curator Pedro Alonzo writes, "The *Iconoclasm* drawings are a reminder of the notion of a living history, reflecting humanity's need to celebrate and commemorate, as well as the compulsion to destroy symbols of a past that conflict with a specific dominant world view. Given the global rise in political polarization, media misinformation, religious extremism and nationalism, *Iconoclasm* presents a critical opportunity to explore humanity's relationship with the symbols of the past and how to address them as society changes."

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The new catalog *Iconoclasm* featuring this body of work is authored by Pedro Alonzo and published by Library Street Collective, Detroit.

Sam Durant lives and works in Los Angeles and Berlin. His work has been exhibited extensively around the world including in recent solo exhibitions at Art and the Landscape, The Old Manse, Concord, MA (2016); Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis, MO (2015); Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA (2014); Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma, Rome, Italy (2013); *dOCUMENTA (13)*, Karslauer Park, Kassel, Germany (2013); Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, MA (2006); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN (2003); and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA (2002). His work is featured in public and private collections internationally including: the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth, Australia; Fonds National d'Art Contemporain, Paris, France; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Project Row Houses, Houston, TX; Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent, Belgium; and the Tate Modern, London, UK.

## About Blum & Poe

Blum & Poe was founded by Timothy Blum and Jeffrey Poe in Santa Monica in September of 1994 as a space to show local and international contemporary art in all media. Blum's extensive experience in the Japanese art world combined with Poe's keen knowledge of emerging artists in Los Angeles, together resulted in an international program of influential artists. Throughout a twenty-six-year history, Blum & Poe has shaped the trajectory of contemporary art by championing artists at all stages of their careers—cultivating the lineages that run between emerging and established practices, and working with artist estates to generate new discourse surrounding historical work.

In 2003 the gallery moved to a larger space in Culver City, and in 2009 Blum & Poe purchased and renovated its current 22,000 square foot complex on La Cienega Boulevard. In this location the gallery has since held museum-caliber surveys, examining the historical work of such movements as the Japanese Mono-ha school (2012); the Korean Dansaekhwa monochrome painters (2014); the European postwar movement CoBrA (2015); Japanese art of 1980s and '90s (2019); a rereading of Brazilian Modernism (2019); and a revisionist take on the 1959 MoMA exhibition, *New Images of Man* (2020). To produce these exhibitions, Blum & Poe has worked with celebrated curators such as Joan Kee, Mika Yoshitake, Sofia Gotti, and Alison M. Gingeras.

In 2014, Blum & Poe opened galleries in New York and Tokyo to focus on intimately scaled projects in tandem with an expansive program of exhibitions, lectures, performance series, screenings, and an annual art book fair at its base in Los Angeles. In 2015, Blum & Poe was certified as an Arts:Earth Partnership (AEP) green art gallery and consequently became one of the first green certified galleries in the United States. Blum & Poe's own publishing division focuses on sharing aspects of its program via original scholarship and accessible media ranging from academic monographs, audio series, magazines, and artists' books. In 2020, the gallery launched Blum & Poe Broadcasts, an online platform showcasing artists' projects in conjunction with physical installations or as standalone digital endeavors.

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