

HAUSER & WIRTH

Disparatus



Press Release

Online Exhibition

Mark Bradford. Quarantine Paintings

hauserwirth.com

Live date: Tuesday 8 September 2020

Beginning 8 September, Hauser & Wirth will present 'Quarantine Paintings,' an online exhibition of new works by Los Angeles-based artist Mark Bradford. Created during the COVID-19 quarantine dictated by LA County's stay-at-home order, this series finds the artist exploring the nature of art in isolation and what it means to create in a time of intense societal indetermination. Bradford's new paintings will be presented online via photographs of individual works and the details of their surfaces, as well as installation views of the same works hanging in an empty exhibition space at Hauser & Wirth's Downtown Los Angeles complex.

Titled 'Q1,' 'Q2,' and 'Q3,' Bradford's paintings feature gridded structures that appear, disappear, and reappear between broad smears of black caulk or streaks of red, yellow, and orange paper. Organic blues, greens, and browns evoking the natural environment creep across the planes of the canvases, suggesting a realignment underway in the relationships between competing natural and artificial forces. Uninterrupted bursts of electric color create strobing effects. Gone from these paintings are the hotspots and lesions that have become a familiar feature in Bradford's work in recent years. Gone are the wads of paper rising from the surface of the canvas and marking discrete locations, the formal analogs to specific real-world acts of violence, disruption, and decay.

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In the absence of such powerful visual markers, the abstraction of Bradford's Quarantine Paintings is disassociated from a distinct time and place. This detachment mirrors the way we have been untethered by the pandemic from our familiar temporal and spatial signposts, and parallels the abstraction of our individual and collective experiences within the larger social body. Whereas Bradford has spent the last two decades of his career making paintings that directly explore specific economic, political, and social forces that objectify and marginalize vulnerable communities, his Quarantine Paintings take an oblique approach to the challenges confronting the world today.

Bradford supplements the narratives around the work through his choice of exhibition format. As an installed exhibition visible only through images on a digital platform, 'Quarantine Paintings' brings into high relief the contrast between a past of daily togetherness and 'live' encounters that we have easily taken for granted, and a present marked by uncertainty, isolation, and a widespread sense of a world in the midst of a collective out-of-body experience.

In this context, Bradford's Quarantine Paintings draw focus to the purpose art serves when the social milieu that brings bodies and voices into contact with it – and that significantly shapes our experience of it – has been dispersed. By occurring digitally, this exhibition invites each viewer into contact with Bradford's work while simultaneously denying intimate access to its powerful physical presence, setting up an experience that argues for the urgency of art and togetherness during a moment of social unraveling.

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Mark Bradford
Q2 (Detail)
2020
Mixed media on canvas
182.9 x 243.8 cm / 72 x 96 in

Installation view, 'Mark Bradford.
Quarantine Paintings', Hauser &
Wirth Los Angeles, 2020