

**Martin Boyce**

*Long Distance*

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery Los Angeles

September 17 - October 29, 2022

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is pleased to present *Long Distance*, a solo exhibition of new work by Martin Boyce, on view in Los Angeles from September 17 - October 29, 2022. This will be Boyce's fifth solo exhibition with Tanya Bonakdar; his first at the Los Angeles gallery.

Martin Boyce's sculptures, photographs and installations poetically investigate the intersections between art, architecture, design, and nature. Since the beginning of his career, he has incorporated a palette of shapes and forms that frequently recall familiar structures from the built environment – a phone booth, a chain-linked fence, a ventilation grill, to name a few – yet presents them in a way that is entirely new. Collapsing distinctions between past, present, and future, Boyce's works seem to exist in their own autonomous world, untethered to any fixed time or place.

In *Long Distance*, five painted wall panels and a mobile act as the location for a series of analog telephones. Drawing inspiration from cinema and literature, Boyce explores the telephone and its relationship to drama and location. Through a multitude of area codes and time zones it allows our voice to, almost supernaturally, appear somewhere else, to be in two places at once. It can be a passive medium or an intimate co-conspirator. Its presence alone introduces the potential for drama, 'an object through which fate comes to call' (An Elegy for the Landline in Literature, Sophie Haigney).

In these new phone panels, the 'canvas' is made of perforated steel, painted and over-painted to create a rich, textured backdrop with layers of colour and shade. Appearing solid from a distance, the perforations only become apparent as one gets closer, as if the surface itself is only partially present. The design of the telephones incorporate a lexicon of shapes and motifs that appear throughout Boyce's work. The curved shapes, which find their origins in the new pattern of the ventilation grill sculptures, have freed themselves to become physical compositional elements within the paintings. The telephones occupy this painted space, these porous walls, perhaps awaiting future calls from their own impending obsolescence.

In the installation *Place On Hold*, Boyce explores the cinematic image of a chair being used to wedge a door closed. As the writer George Perec noted in *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*, any door "breaks space in two, splits it, prevents osmosis, imposes a partition. On one side, me and my place, the private, the domestic...on the other side, other people, the world, the public, politics."

In light of the dramatic shifts in world politics over the last few years, Boyce felt compelled to revisit his 1999 work *Chair (Noir)*, which was designed with an adjustable backrest that could extend to meet the underside of a door, creating a wedge. It functions not to provide comfort but instead to barricade oneself in and to keep the world out. In contrast to the utopian project of modernism, it is a device for inculcating and amplifying paranoia, a mental state that pervades the current political conditions of contested borders, mass migration, and fear-based isolationist ideologies.

In *Place on Hold*, we see from the chair itself and the corresponding *Drawing LD / CH01* that it is an intentional, fabricated device rather than an innocent object whose new use has been improvised. The chair's protective nature and paranoid tendencies are built in rather than adopted. Like players within a stage set or characters in a film, the telephones, the chair and the door are protagonists of the exhibition – there is a silent expectation that at any moment these portals could introduce a welcome visit or an unexpected intrusion. While the telephones represent the possibility of connectivity, the chair wants to prevent contact and keep the world out. It tentatively lodges us in a perpetual present, a frozen now that keeps us from the linearity of the past, present and future.

Thresholds, conduits, and portals reoccur throughout Boyce's work. Gates, fences, doors, vents, and more recently the telephones are all objects that delineate boundaries between one place and another. In the installation *Place On Hold*, a set of vents introduces a new repeat pattern, which expands upon the artist's earlier Concrete Tree pattern. The new curved motif finds itself in a face-off with the older, more angular pattern embedded within every detail of the door. The chair wedges the door firmly closed, but layers of porous thresholds permeate the scene. The vents of the bronze grill that partially covers an aperture in the door and the keyhole all allow minuscule moments of seepage. In Los Angeles the architecture of Richard Neutra and Rudolph Schindler attempted to blur the distinctions of inside and out. *Place on Hold* taps into a similar set of conditions. The interiority of the chair and door is reinforced by the vents, but the leaves create a dreamlike uncertainty. Suddenly we are outside but are we barricaded in or out?

Winner of the Tate's 2011 Turner Prize, Boyce was born in Hamilton, Scotland in 1967 and currently lives and works in Glasgow. He attended the Glasgow School of Art, where he received a BA in Environmental Art in 1990 and an MFA in 1997. In 1996, he also studied at California Institute for the Arts in Valencia, CA.

In 2009, Boyce represented Scotland at the 53rd Venice Biennale with a solo pavilion presentation entitled *No Reflections*, which traveled to Dundee Contemporary Arts in Scotland from 2009 to 2010. Recent selected exhibitions include: *On the Other Hand*, Canary Wharf Estate, London (2021); *MONO*, Glasgow Print Studio, Glasgow (2021); *Recurring Dreams*, Haubrok Foundation, Berlin (2021); *Just Beyond the Undertow*, CONVENT Space for Contemporary Art, Ghent (2019); *An Inn For Phantoms Of The Outside And In*, Mount Stuart, Isle of Bute (2019); *Hanging Gardens*, A4 Art Museum, Chengdu (2018); *Spotlight – Do Words Have Voices*, Tate Britain, London (2016); Museum für Gegenwartskunst Basel, Basel (2015); and *When Now is Night*, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence (2015).

Boyce's work is represented in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Tate in London, Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt, Germany, Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, PA, Gallery of Modern Art in Glasgow, and Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, among other institutions worldwide.