

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

Martin Puryear

February 16 – April 8, 2023

Opening: Wednesday, February 15, 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **Martin Puryear**, the next exhibition in his galleries at 1062 North Orange Grove and 7818 Santa Monica Boulevard in Los Angeles. Puryear's first one-person exhibition in Los Angeles in over 30 years, it includes seven sculptures made over the past five years in a variety of media including wood, bronze, and stone.

Looking Askance (2023), is constructed from red cedar and pine and finished with an oil-based paint in silvery gray. From one side, the sculpture evokes the shape of a colossal head, a form that has appeared in the artist's work through the decades. From the other side, the work reveals a flat surface with a curved tubular opening crossing through the volume's interior, which not only foregrounds the artist's craftsmanship, but also, what Robert Storr has described as the "dialectic within Puryear's working methods between open and closed forms."

The shape of the bulging latticework of *Aso Oke* (2019) is inspired by the Nigerian hat of the same name made from handwoven cloth. Puryear built a seven-foot-tall pattern in rattan and twine in his studio, which he then cast in bronze.

The first version of *A Column for Sally Hemings* (2021) was exhibited in the US Pavilion at the Venice Biennale in 2019. The base of the sculpture is fluted like the Pavilion's Doric columns, which were modeled on those at Thomas Jefferson's estate, Monticello, where Sally Hemings was enslaved. Carved from white marble, the sculpture's base tapers at its top like the waist of a skirt. Set into the marble is a cast-iron stake culminating in a ring, a form that first appeared in Puryear's work in the 2014 sculpture *Shackled*.

In the wall-mounted *Hibernian Testosterone* (2018), a cruciform of American cypress supports an animal skull sprouting enormous antlers belonging to the Irish elk, an extinct animal once common across Ice Age Europe. Puryear has reproduced the twelve-foot wide antlers at actual size. They are a magnificent form but also, as the title implies, an absurd display of masculinity, one that biologists say contributed to the species' demise.

Martin Puryear (b.1941) was born in Washington, DC. His first one-person exhibition was in 1968, and has since exhibited his work throughout the world, including public commissions in Europe, Asia, and the United States. His work was featured in the São Paulo Bienal in 1989, where he was awarded the festival's Grand Prize, and Documenta 9 in 1992. In 2007 the Museum of Modern Art in New York organized a touring survey of his work, and in 2019 he represented the United States at the 58th Venice Biennale. Puryear received a MacArthur Foundation award in 1989, a National Medal of Arts in 2011, and the Getty Medal last year.

Martin Puryear opens at 1062 North Orange Grove and 7818 Santa Monica Boulevard on Wednesday, February 15 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM and remains on view through April 8, 2023, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

For additional information, please call 212-243-0200 or email inquiries@matthewmarks.com.