

W H I T E C U B E

Press Release

Theaster Gates

Hold Me, Hold Me, Hold Me

26 January – 2 March 2024

White Cube New York

White Cube is pleased to present 'Hold Me, Hold Me, Hold Me' by Theaster Gates, the artist's first solo exhibition at White Cube New York, located at 1002 Madison Avenue.

The title of the exhibition honours the 1970s duet 'Be Real Black For Me' by Donny Hathaway and Roberta Flack. Drawing from the echoed repetition of the phrase 'hold me' midway through the song, Gates explores the connections between music, composition, and the complex interactions between artistry and mental health, acknowledging the truth of Hathaway's own profound struggles with fame and creative transmission during his lifetime.

Transforming the gallery into a tableau of personal and collective memory, the exhibition explores how sound holds pain and suffering, joy, temporality, memory and contingency, through an engagement with the history of built environments, craftsmanship and music.

Highlights include the large-scale sculptural work *Sweet Sanctuary, Your Embrace* (2023), a piano that the artist tarred in studio, demonstrating an act of preservation that also entails rendering the object incapable of its original function. In tribute to his father's craft as a roofer, the instrument has been tarred and wrapped in roofing materials – a technique which is likewise applied to the artist's new series of tar paintings.

In his Kohler sink sculpture, *Radical Prioritizing: 1840s Style* (2010), Gates commemorates the histories of Black craftsmanship, paying homage to Dave Drake ('Dave the Potter'), an enslaved potter from South Carolina known for inscribing his clay works with poetic couplets and his signature.

Three multi-part installations draw from the archival holdings of the Johnson Publishing Company (JPC), the Chicago-based publisher renowned for producing *Ebony* and *Jet*, two iconic lifestyle magazines that became fixtures in Black households across the US. In the same gallery space, towering at nearly ten feet high, 'The Duet' (2023) comprises two bronze vessels through which Gates honours the legacy of form and ceramics at an architectural scale.

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Coalescing the past 15 years of Gates's socially engaged practice as an artist, archivist and urban planner, the exhibition stands as a dedication to both the rich legacies and irreducible influence of Black culture and craft.

For additional information, interview requests, or press images please contact:

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Notes to Editors:

- Theaster Gates (b.1973) lives and works in Chicago, Illinois. He is a professor at the University of Chicago in the Department of Visual Arts and serves as the Special Advisor to the President for Arts Initiatives.

Gates has exhibited widely, including solo exhibitions at LUMA Foundation, Arles, France (2023); New Museum, New York (2022); Serpentine Pavilion, London (2022); Frederick Kiesler Foundation, Vienna, (2022); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2021); Victoria & Albert Museum, London (2021); TANK Shanghai (2021); Prada Rhong Zhai, Shanghai (2021); Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, Atlanta, Georgia (2020); Tate Liverpool, UK (2020); Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany (2019); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota (2019); Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin (2019); Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2019); Fondazione Prada, Milan, Italy (2018); Kunstmuseum Basel, Switzerland (2018); Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany (2018); National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (2017); Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada (2016); Fondazione Prada, Milan, Italy (2016); Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria (2016); Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Illinois (2013); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2013); Seattle Art Museum, Washington, DC (2011); Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, California (2011); Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin (2010); and St. Louis Art Museum, Missouri (2010).

Gates has participated in many group exhibitions including the 18th International Architecture Biennale, Venice (2023); Fondazione Prada, Venice (2023); Brooklyn Museum, New York (2023); Punta della Dogana – Pinault Collection, Venice (2023); Sharjah Biennial 15, UAE (2023); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2022); Aichi Triennale, Tokoname City, Japan (2022); Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson, Mississippi (2022); New Museum, New York (2021); Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia, and Crystal Bridges Museum, Arkansas (2021); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California (2020); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2017); 14th Istanbul Biennial (2015); 56th Venice Biennale (2015); Prospect 3, New Orleans (2014); Documenta 13, Kassel, Germany (2012); and Whitney Biennial, New York (2010).

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Gates is the recipient of numerous awards and honorary degrees including the Isamu Noguchi Award (2023); Friedrich Kiesler Prize for Architecture and Art (2021); the Royal Institute of British Architects (2021); the World Economic Forum Crystal Award (2020); J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development (2018); Nasher Sculpture Prize (2018); Sprengel Museum Kurt Schwitters Prize (2017); and Artes Mundi 6 prize (2015). In April 2018 Gates was appointed the first distinguished visiting artist and Director of Artist Initiatives at the Lunder Institute for American Art, Colby College, Waterville, Maine. He was the visiting artist in residence at the American Academy in Rome (2020); and was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2021.

- White Cube's exhibition programme extends across locations in London, Hong Kong, Paris, New York, Seoul and online. Since its inception in 1993, the gallery has exhibited the work of many of the world's most highly acclaimed contemporary artists.
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