

# GAVLAK

**Maynard Monrow: *Ecstatic Havoc***

**GAVLAK Palm Beach**

**January 20 – February 19, 2024**

GAVLAK Palm Beach is pleased to present *Ecstatic Havoc*, an exhibition of new works by New York-based artist, Maynard Monrow—marking the artist’s 4th exhibition with the gallery. This new body of work, which is being shown publicly for the first time, marks an important, natural evolution within the artist’s practice. This presentation will be accompanied by a publication. Concurrent to the exhibition, Monrow’s work is currently on view in the group exhibition “Phraseology” at the Bass Museum of Art, Miami; and at The Norton Museum of Art’s Artist Project at the Karp House

Language has been a key subject for Monrow for the past two decades. His use of text as image in various media expose the intersection and often fallibility of both representational systems. Monrow asserts that the role of art goes beyond reinforcing conventional ideals of beauty; instead, it has the power to establish alternative structures and frameworks, facilitating a broader and more inclusive perspective. This philosophy is represented in works such as “Be Reasonable, Demand the Impossible”, where the work dictates its content, allowing its viewer to re-interpret it based on her or his own experiences.

Monrow’s work is positioned between the legacy of American conceptual art from the 1960s, which favored language in place of more traditional materials like brushes and canvas; and the Art & Language movement, which questioned the critical assumptions of mainstream modern art practice and criticism. His minimalist, yet politically-charged compositions, echo Jenny Holzer’s painted signs, Luiz Camnitzer’s radical humor, John Giorno’s *Comedic Tragedies* and Rene Ricard’s *Sacred and Profane*. Furthermore, Monrow creates his own socio/political hybrid within this art historic tradition.

The wall sculptures that Monrow began constructing in 2012, re-contextualize the source materials within his work to create complex, metaphorical compositions that confront social and political issues surrounding politics, critical theory, and identity. They are made with readymades, including corrugated felt boards and prefabricated plastic letters, which are typically used by businesses, such as cafeterias, building lobbies, and churches, to disseminate public information. By placing these commonplace signs within a white cube gallery setting, Monrow invites the viewer to reconsider the use of critical theory and language as forms of contemporary art.

The juxtaposition of visual object and text is consistent throughout Monrow’s practice. In his most recent bronze works, he has chosen to cast timely and sensitive statements that relate to contemporary politics and social injustice. By rendering them in metal, the artist adds weight and immortality to statements that would otherwise be printed or circulated only momentarily through the news cycle.

Since earning his BFA from the California Institute of the Arts in 2001, Monrow has been a dynamic figure in the art world. Galavanting as a disruptor-vivant and a conceptual flâneur,

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Monrow keenly observes the ironies and peculiarities of everyday life, presenting them with his unique artistic flair. His dedication to engaging the public in his own creative process underscores his position as a trailblazer in process-oriented art. It mirrors his unwavering commitment to critiquing modern politics, and his enduring belief in the transformative potential of art.

## **About the Artist**

Maynard Monrow was born in Hollywood, California and currently lives in New York City. He received his BFA and MFA from the California Institute of the Arts. His work has been exhibited at numerous institutions and galleries including: The FLAG Art Foundation, New York, NY; Art and Culture Center of Hollywood, Hollywood, FL; Gavlak Gallery LA and Palm Beach; Booth Gallery, New York, NY; Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York, NY and ACME Gallery, Los Angeles, CA. He has staged international performances in Rome, Italy, and participated in numerous projects including Ruffian's Spring 2016 Ready-to-Wear Collection and LAX Art's L.A.P.D. Billboard Project.