

press release

## TIM ROLLINS AND K.O.S.

**4 June – 14 July 2013**

**private view: Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 6.30 – 8.30 pm**

Maureen Paley is pleased to announce an exhibition of new work by Tim Rollins and K.O.S.

Tim Rollins is an artist, teacher and activist who began his career as the assistant of the conceptual artist Joseph Kosuth. In 1979 he co-founded Group Material in New York. In the early 1980s, he taught students at Intermediate School 52 in the Bronx and went on to create the Art & Knowledge Workshop. His highly acclaimed collaboration with the members of K.O.S. (Kids of Survival) continues to this day. Rollins combines lessons in reading and writing with making artworks. The source material laid out and studied by the students generally relates to literary or musical classics, such as works by William Shakespeare, George Orwell, Ralph Ellison or Franz Schubert, but can also include comics or legal documents.

Their collaborative work takes the form of drawings, photographs, sculptural objects and paintings on canvas and paper. The backgrounds of works are often comprised of pages of books pasted into a grid. The results blend elements of Minimalism with an interest in the revival of painting that took place in the 1980s and in art that is socially and politically engaged. Rollins has said: 'What we're doing changes people's conception about who can make art, how art is made, who can learn and what's possible, because a lot of these kids had been written off by the school system. This is our revenge.'

Inspired by the Time Traveller in H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895) the group have endeavored to explore this idea in their exhibition and have made work based on imaginary 'visitations' with Shakespeare, Mendelssohn, Haydn, Darwin and Strauss.

Their journey begins in 1590 at the time when Shakespeare was writing *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and simultaneously in 1826 when Mendelssohn at 17 years of age began work on his own score for a production of this play. In their work *A Midsummer Night's Dream (after Shakespeare, 1590–1596 and Mendelssohn 1826–1842)* they invited young people to transform into the character of Puck, painting flowers and blossom over sheet music from Mendelssohn's score that was completed in 1842. Next they imagined the first performance of *The Seven Last Words of Christ* by Haydn in 1786 and created seven paintings that use black Spinel pigment that they applied onto pages from this score. They then visited Charles Darwin in 1837 as he began sketching out his idea of a 'Tree of Life' in one image that would be developed into his theory of evolution described in *On the Origin of Species* published in 1859.

In 1945 they meet with Richard Strauss in the final days of WWII while he was composing his elegiac and mournful *Metamorphosen* (in Memorium). This music created a deep desire within the group to reflect on their experiences working in the South Bronx that brought up feelings of tragedy and transformation, destruction and rebirth. They have created a meditation in this new body of work that memorialises, researches and remains hopeful by existing in past, present and future tenses.

'We embrace the idea of the arena of art existing in the fourth dimension of a social imagination beyond space and time, contingency and possibility.' Tim Rollins and K.O.S.

'The past is not dead. In fact, it's not even past.' William Faulkner

Tim Rollins was born 1955 in Pittsfield/ME, USA and lives and works in New York. The current members of the K.O.S. are Angel Abreu, born in Philadelphia/PA, USA 1974; Jorge Abreu, born in New York/NY, USA 1979; Robert Branch, born in New York/NY, USA 1977; Daniel Castillo, born in New York/NY, USA 1982; Nelson Ricardo Savinon, born in New York/NY, USA 1971 and Bryce Zackery, born in Rochester/MN, USA 1984.

Solo Exhibitions include *Tim Rollins and K.O.S. — On Transfiguration*, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel, Switzerland, 2012, *Tim Rollins and K.O.S. — The Black Spot*, Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, UK, 2012, *Tim Rollins and K.O.S. — On Transfiguration*, GAMeC – Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Bergamo, Bergamo, Italy, 2011, *What Matters*, Worcester Art Museum, Worcester/MA, USA, 2010, Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, Great Britain, 1998, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington/DC, USA, 1992; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles/CA, USA, 1990 and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis/MN, USA, 1988.

In 2012 they contributed to the Wide Open School at the Hayward Gallery, London and will collaborate with the School of Visual Arts and students from public schools and programmes in New York's Chelsea neighbourhood to create a work for the High Line Park in 2013.

For further information please contact Rory Mitchell: rory@maureenpaley.com

The gallery is open from Wednesday to Sunday 11.00 am – 6.00 pm and by appointment.