

STEVE M^cQUEEN

Bounty

24 May – 25 July 2025
79 rue du Temple, 75003 Paris

Steve M^cQueen and Hans Ulrich Obrist in conversation:
Saturday, 21 June at 3 pm

Marian Goodman Gallery is pleased to present *Bounty*, Steve M^cQueen's first solo exhibition in France since 2016. One of the most influential artists of his generation and an internationally acclaimed filmmaker, M^cQueen is known for his inventive dissemination of social constructs, often addressing painful and overlooked histories through projected images and sound. *Bounty*, a series of 47 photographs capturing the vivid beauty of flowers native to the Caribbean Island of Grenada, makes its European debut following its presentation at Dia Chelsea in New York currently on view along with *Sunshine State*, a contemplative work on time and cinema. Through this verdant imagery, M^cQueen offers more than a study of nature: he presents a meditation on history, West Indian heritage, and resilience. A new work and *Exodus* (1992/1997), one of his earliest films, are presented alongside *Bounty*.

Bounty is not M^cQueen's first work created in Grenada, his parents' country of origin; two earlier video installations, *Carib's Leap* (2002) and *Ashes* (2016), each subsequent results of his travels there, juxtapose idyllic scenes with tragic narratives. While *Carib's Leap* is a poignant homage to the island's indigenous people who in 1651 once chose death over surrendering to the invading French, *Ashes* commemorates the life of a young man, murdered at 25 at the hands of drug dealers. These works challenge the postcard-perfect imagery often associated with the Caribbean, subtly suggesting that beauty and violence, life and death, have always coexisted on the island.

With *Bounty*, M^cQueen continues this exploration through a similarly evocative approach. At first glance, the 47 photographs on view present vibrant, colorful and tropical flora, such as yellow hibiscus, West Indian jasmine and pink ginger lily, reminiscent of the tradition of floral representations in art history. Yet beneath the surface of this inflorescence lies a deeper, more painful truth. These plants have silently witnessed the island's tragic past: the disappearance of its indigenous people and the cruel history of colonization, marked by the deportation and enslavement of Africans under French and British rule over the course of several centuries.

"What has been constant in the landscape is the beauty of the flowers. These plants have been a marvel in a landscape traumatized by colonialism and slavery," explains M^cQueen who sees these flowers "as flesh wounds, as hurt, as pain." In M^cQueen's eyes, the contrast between nature's splendor and history's brutality reveals a disturbing paradox: "Sometimes the most horrible things happen in the most beautiful places; it's perverse." This contradiction is further pronounced by the title of the series, with *Bounty* referring both to nature's abundance and to the reward once paid for capturing or killing enslaved people.

Through each flower's concealed encapsulation of untold stories, hopes and sufferings, M^cQueen pays tribute to generations of the West Indies's inhabitants. Here, evergrowing florals simultaneously symbolize acts of remembrance and resilience. The intensity of the series comes not only from this historical evocation but also from the intricate details of the installation, in which prints are arranged in one continuous line across the gallery's Sienna red-painted walls. M^cQueen's close attention to the viewer's experience is a constant in his practice, each of his presentations is conceived as a transformative journey, prompting reflection on how one's gaze changes between entering and leaving the exhibition space.

As cultural studies scholar Paul Gilroy notes in a recent essay: "Steve M^cQueen's art has frequently confounded the human sensorium. His restless reorientation of visual perception has involved inventing new angles from which to examine the human body and the world. He has sought perspectives to defamiliarize the eyes' interpretative habits, interrogating its 'peculiar disposition' to

perceive the world in racializing ways. The quest for unprecedented ways to see and thus to know, is unrelenting.” (Paul Gilroy, “For a Low-end Theory of Black Atlantic Cymatics” in *Steve McQueen, Bass*, published by Laurenz Foundation, Schaulager Basel and Dia Art Foundation, 2024.)

A conversation between McQueen and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director of the Serpentine Galleries, London, will be held at the gallery on Saturday, 21 June at 3 pm. Admission is free, subject to availability and advance booking.

Awarded the Turner Prize in 1999 and the 2024 Rolf Schock Prize in Visual Arts, Steve McQueen (1969 -) has had his artwork presented at some of the most significant venues and museums around the world. His work has been featured in Documenta (1997 and 2002). He represented Great Britain at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009 and was selected several times for the Venice Biennale (2003, 2007, 2013, and 2015). A co-commission by Dia Art Foundation and Laurenz Foundation, Schaulager, *Bass* (2024) is an immersive, site-responsive installation consisting of shifting spectrums of light in concert with sound inspired in part by the hybrid musical idiom that resulted from the transatlantic slave trade, on view at Dia Beacon until 26 May 2025, that will continue onwards with a custom presentation at Schaulager, Basel from 15 June to 16 November 2025. A concurrent presentation of *Sunshine State* is currently on view at Dia Chelsea in New York until 19 July 2025. *Resistance*, a show conceived by McQueen that chronicles a century of British protest through photography, is on view through 1 June 2025 at Turner Contemporary, Margate (UK), before traveling to the National Galleries Scotland: Modern Two, Edinburgh, from 21 June 2025 to 4 January 2026.

Solo exhibitions of his work have been held at the Art Institute of Chicago (2012); Schaulager, Basel (2012-2013); Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester (2017); The Museum of Modern Art, New York (2017); Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2017). In 2019 he presented *YEAR 3* at Tate Britain and had a major solo exhibition at Tate Modern in 2020, which toured to Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan, in 2022. In 2023, *Grenfell*, a film made in response to the tragic fire that took place at Grenfell Tower, was presented at the Serpentine South Gallery, London. A national tour of *Grenfell* (2025-2027) is currently in progress in public art galleries in six major cities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

McQueen has directed five feature films; *Hunger* (2008), *Shame* (2011), *12 Years a Slave* (2013), *Widows* (2018) and *Blitz* (2024). *Hunger* was awarded the Caméra d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival, and *12 Years a Slave* received the Golden Globe, Oscar, and BAFTA Awards for best picture in 2014. His latest feature, *Blitz*, the story of a mixed-race family in the context of the bombing of London in 1940, was released in 2024. In 2020, he directed *Small Axe*, an anthology of five films about London’s West Indian community and in 2021, *Uprising*, a three-part documentary with James Rogan about the New Cross Fire in London in 1981. His documentary film, *Occupied City*, a portrait of Nazi and modern-day Amsterdam, debuted at Cannes in May 2023.

McQueen was named an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 2002 and a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2011. He was knighted in the 2020 New Year Honors list. McQueen was born in West London and is based in London and Amsterdam.

Marian Goodman Gallery champions the work of artists who stand among the most influential of our time and represents over five generations of diverse thought and practice. The Gallery’s exhibition program, characterized by its caliber and rigor, provides international platforms for its artists to showcase their work, foster vital dialogues with new audiences, and advance their practices within nonprofit and institutional realms. Established in New York City in 1977, Marian Goodman Gallery gained prominence early in its trajectory for introducing the work of seminal European artists to American audiences. Today, through its exhibition spaces in New York, Los Angeles, and Paris, the Gallery maintains its global focus, representing some 50 artists working in the U.S. and internationally.

Press Contact
 Raphaële Coutant, Director of Communications
 raphael@mariangoodman.com
 +33 (0) 1 48 04 70 52