

Press Release

## James Jarvaise & Henry Taylor. Sometimes a straight line has to be crooked

29 June – 5 October 2025

Hauser & Wirth Downtown Los Angeles

North A & B Galleries



Henry Taylor, 'Portrait of my nephew "Sean Dominick Kendrick", never drift away,' 2024

James Jarvaise, 'Man in the Room,' 1963

**Los Angeles...** 'Sometimes a straight line has to be crooked' is the first exhibition to put the work of Henry Taylor, one of today's most celebrated painters, in dialogue with that of his teacher, California modernist James Jarvaise (1924 – 2015). Taylor will explore an idea he has long carried: to pay homage to Jarvaise—an artist who saw something special in him as a student in the 1980s—through an exhibition. Composed along loosely thematic lines and consisting largely of paintings, this major installation will span the 1950s to the present, with new works created especially for the show by Taylor, whose interest in landscape, alongside the figure, will be freshly explored. The first exhibition of Taylor's work to take place at Hauser & Wirth in Los Angeles, the title is taken from advice Jarvaise imparted to his student: the words of a vital teacher who offered Taylor many lessons on how to build a painting with integrity.

Seen together for the first time, the exhibition will feature over seven decades of work by the two artists. On view will be paintings and related drawings from Jarvaise's historic Hudson River School series, which was included in the 1959 exhibition 'Sixteen Americans' at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, alongside that of Jay DeFeo, Jasper Johns, Robert Rauschenberg, Frank Stella and other emerging artists of the time. These works will be presented along with modernist collages from the 1950s, figurative paintings from the 1960s, and large-scale paintings on burlap from the 1970s that were specifically chosen by Taylor. The installation will also encapsulate three decades of Taylor's work with over 40 paintings to concentrate on portraits of friends, family and strangers, figure studies, neighborhood scenes and landscapes. New works on view will include a group of tree sculptures—each trunk sporting an arboreal afro of artificial hair—that Taylor, who plays as hard with language as he does the brush, refers to as his 'For-Us' forest.



Henry Taylor, 'DRIVE THRU,' 2018



James Jarvaise, 'Untitled (Figure Landscape)'

'James Jarvaise was significant to me because he changed my life.'

—Henry Taylor

Henry Taylor credits James Jarvaise with having been the first to recognize his talents in the early 1980s. At the time, Taylor was supporting himself as a psychiatric technician at the Camarillo State Mental Hospital while pursuing a range of interests, including classes in journalism, cultural anthropology and set design at Oxnard College. There, he repeatedly enrolled in Jarvaise's painting class, where he was introduced to the works of Max Beckmann, Jean Dubuffet, Philip Guston, Cy Twombly and other modernists who were entirely new to him. At the same time, Jarvaise recognized something urgent and distinctive in Taylor, and insisted the student take himself seriously as an artist. Taylor accordingly enrolled at CalArts but continued to bring his work to Jarvaise for valued critiques. Taylor describes packing up his car with paintings and waiting in the college parking lot to show Jarvaise his latest explorations, relying on his critique to resolve and push a painting to completeness.

When exhibited together, the works of Jarvaise and Taylor appear to be in clear dialogue with one another. Notwithstanding the obvious differences in their approach to content and historical contexts, Taylor's vivid portrait of Jarvaise and Jarvaise's archetypal 'Man in the Room' (1963) have a strikingly similar resonance and shared sensibility. 'Sometimes a straight line has to be crooked' connects Jarvaise and Taylor formally—works on view spotlight the two artists' approaches to massing flat shapes that move between figuration and abstraction, and their talent for deploying off-beat colors, strong tones, straight horizons and curvaceous lines—and unites them energetically across time.

#### About James Jarvaise

A California regionalist who taught generations of students at schools in and around Los Angeles, James Jarvaise gained national acclaim when his work was included in the historic 1959 exhibition 'Sixteen Americans' at The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Writing for *The New Yorker*, critic Robert Coates commended 'the coolly green, strongly linear group of abstract oils called 'Hudson River Series,' all with landscape motifs, by James Jarvaise.' Over subsequent years, Jarvaise exhibited regularly at the Felix Landau gallery in Los Angeles and elsewhere before turning his focus to home: after moving his family to Santa Barbara in 1970, Jarvaise dedicated his time to crafting an artist's paradise where he continued to work in peaceful privacy. In 2012, a survey of his work at Louis Stern gallery in Los Angeles was accompanied by a monograph. Over the course of his teaching career, Jarvaise was affiliated with USC, California Institute of the Arts (formerly Chouinard Arts Institute), Occidental College, Santa Barbara Art Institute and Oxnard College, where he retired in 2004. Prominent among generations of his students are Charles Arnoldi, David Novros, Peter Plagens, Henry Taylor and Robert Therrien. His work

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was collected by museums including the Albright Knox Gallery, Buffalo; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Museum of Modern Art, New York and the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.

### About Henry Taylor

Henry Taylor lives and works in Los Angeles CA. In 2022, a major survey exhibition dedicated to the artist, 'Henry Taylor: B Side,' his largest to date, was exhibited at The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles CA and was then on view at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York NY until January 2024. Taylor's work was recently featured in the following group exhibitions: 'Flight into Egypt: Black Artists and Ancient Egypt, 1976–Now' at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York NY; 'The Time is Always Now: Artists Reframe the Black Figure' at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia PA and 'World Without End: The George Washington Carver Project' at the California African American Museum, Los Angeles CA. Taylor's work is in prominent public collections including the Bourse de Commerce – Pinault Collection, Paris, France, Broad Museum, Los Angeles CA, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh PA, The Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, France, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles CA, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston MA, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles CA, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York NY, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles CA, Museum of Fine Art, Houston TX, Museum of Modern Art, New York NY, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco CA, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York NY, and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York NY. In 2018, Taylor was the recipient of The Robert De Niro, Sr. Prize in 2018 for his outstanding achievements in painting. Taylor's work was presented at the Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York NY in 2017 and the 58th Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy in 2019.

### Learning

In celebration of 'Sometimes a straight line has to be crooked,' our Education Lab 'Mentoring Moments' will provide a space to explore the transformative power of mentors and teachers. Further details to be announced in June. For more information about Learning at Hauser & Wirth, please visit [www.hauserwirth.com/learning](http://www.hauserwirth.com/learning).

### For additional information, please contact:

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Gallery hours:

Tuesday – Sunday, 11 am – 6 pm

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### Caption and courtesy information:

Henry Taylor

Portrait of my nephew "Sean Dominick Kendrick", never drift away  
2024

Acrylic on canvas

182.9 x 152.4 x 4.4 cm / 72 x 60 x 1 3/4 inches

© Henry Taylor

Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Photo: Keith Lubow

James Jarvaise

Man in the Room

1963

Oil on canvas

153.7 x 153.7 x 3.2 cm / 60 1/2 x 60 1/2 x 1 1/4 in (framed)

© The Estate of James Jarvaise

Photo: Gerard Vuilleumier

Henry Taylor

DRIVE THRU

2018

Acrylic on canvas

152.4 x 121.9 x 3.8 cm / 60 x 48 x 1 1/2 in

© Henry Taylor

Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

Photo: Keith Lubow

James Jarvaise

Untitled (Figure Landscape)

Date Unknown

Oil on canvas

24.8 x 34.6 x 2.2 cm / 9 3/4 x 13 5/8 x 7/8 in (framed)

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Photo: Gerard Vuilleumier