

**McArthur Binion**

***Stuttering:Standing:Still II***

March 5 – April 18, 2026

New York



McArthur Binion, *Self:Portrait*, 2025

“Every painting I make is a self-portrait—not of my face, but of my labor, my memory, my life embedded in the surface.”

—McArthur Binion

Lehmann Maupin is pleased to present *Stuttering:Standing:Still II*, an exhibition of new and recent work by McArthur Binion. Spanning a career of over five decades, Binion’s practice has consistently defied categorization. Renowned for his abstract, grid-based paintings that merge minimalist aesthetics with deeply personal history, Binion’s work continues to expand and reframe the language of abstraction and modernism. This exhibition marks Binion’s first solo presentation in New York in five years and his first late-career survey in the city. Institutions have increasingly recognized Binion’s work alongside a broader disciplinary reconsideration of abstraction’s history. To this end, Binion’s work insists that Black lived experience, memory, and autobiography are not outside modernism, but are in fact central to narratives of minimalism and abstraction.

*Stuttering:Standing:Still II* comes on the heels of a series of institutional exhibitions in 2025, including *Notes on Form (Intimate Structures)*, a survey of Binion’s work at Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., curated by Jaynelle Hazard. Binion was also included in the recent exhibition *Minimal*, curated by Dia Art Foundation director Jessica Morgan, which featured works from the François Pinault Collection tracing the movement’s diversity from the 1960s to today.

Before gaining mainstream recognition, Binion developed a language that runs parallel to—but also critiques—dominant narratives of postwar abstraction. As Binion describes: “*I didn’t come from art history, I landed there. If you look at it spiritually and in an unbiased way, [artists] went to jazz clubs and listened to bebop artists and learned to improvise abstractly...my work starts at that introduction.*” Like jazz music, Binion’s work balances discipline and freedom. Structured by the modernist grid, his paintings unfold through intuitive, moment-by-moment decisions, allowing responsiveness and improvisation to emerge within a rigorous formal framework structured by repetition and sustained attention. His paintings often incorporate photocopied personal documents—birth certificates, address books, pages from encyclopedias, jazz records—embedded beneath layers of paint and wax; Binion refers to this biographical ground as the “under-conscious” of the work. This fusion challenges the notion of minimalism as detached or impersonal, showing instead that rigor and intimacy

can coexist. The repetitive marks, grids, and accumulations evoke labor, duration, and persistence, while the embedded texts anchor the work in biography and history. In this way, Binion’s paintings function simultaneously as abstract compositions and personal archives.

*Stuttering:Standing:Still II* will debut several new works from the artist’s *Under:Ground* series, which extends his long-standing interest in shaped canvases. Born in 1946 in Mississippi and raised on a farm, Binion’s early life continues to inform the material and conceptual foundations of his practice. In the 1980s, Binion penned a list of root vegetables, which remains pinned to his studio wall; in this body of work, it acts as a quiet yet persistent symbol. These everyday roots, according to Binion, relate to lineage, grounding, and the foundational elements of memory. As a Black child in the segregated South, Binion experienced a world where Black life was structurally pushed “underground”—socially constrained, politically suppressed, and rarely acknowledged in official narratives. In these paintings, handwritten documents are placed *under* layers of marks, suggesting that what shapes us most is often what we learn to keep beneath the surface and exploring how we carry these things forward without letting them disappear.

The exhibition also debuts new works from Binion’s *Self:Portrait* series. Departing from traditional Western portraiture, which seeks to reveal the subject, these works deliberately withhold. Here, Binion again paints atop personal documents, but the emphasis shifts. Instead of burying them completely, he lets their function as markers of identity come to the fore. In contrast to his past series—where identity is concealed beneath dense grids—these works assert presence on the surface, transforming restraint into a compelling declaration of self. These compositions also represent a striking evolution in the artist’s practice, moving beyond his characteristic muted palette to embrace a vivid, bold range of colors, infusing the works with heightened energy while maintaining the meticulous structure and rhythm that define his practice. Through his ongoing exploration of the “under-conscious,” where intuition, repetition, and personal history converge, the works on view bridge past and present while asserting Binion’s singular place in the canon.



McArthur Binion (b. 1946, Macon, MS; lives and works in Chicago, IL) combines collage, drawing, and painting to create autobiographical abstractions of painted minimalist patterns over an “under surface” of personal documents and photographs. From photocopies of his birth certificate and pages from his address book, to pictures from his childhood and found photographs of lynchings, the poignant and charged images that constitute the tiled base of his work are concealed and abstracted by grids of oil stick. The complexly layered works, from a distance, appear to be monochromatic minimalist abstractions that have led many to compare his work to that of Jasper Johns, Robert Ryman, or Brice Marden. However, while his contemporaries focused more on materiality, abstraction, and in some cases the social and political climate of the time, Binion’s works are intensely personal and deeply dedicated to the rigorous process of making a painting. Upon closer inspection, these monochromatic abstractions come into focus: the perfect grid becomes a series of imperfect laboriously hand-drawn lines, behind which emerge intimate details of Binion’s identity and personal history. Binion’s gridded compositions impose rational order to the layers of personal history, allowing only fragments of information from his birth certificate to be read, or details of his mother’s face to be identified—but never enough to be immediately legible. Having

begun his career as a writer, Binion is highly influenced by language and music, as can be seen in his titles and the ways in which he layers information to be “read” rather than simply seen. The tension that exists between the grid and the artist’s visible gestures is not unlike that of jazz music, which merges improvisation with the order of a musical composition.

Binion received his B.F.A. from Wayne State University, Detroit, MI in 1971 and his M.F.A. from the Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI in 1973. Select recent solo exhibitions of his work have been organized at the de la Cruz Gallery at Georgetown University (2025); Library Street Collective, Detroit, MI (2023); Museo Novecento, Florence, Italy (2020); the Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI (2018); Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, TX (2012); and the University of Maryland University College Gallery, Adelphi, MD (2010). Recent group exhibitions featuring his work include *Minimal*, Bourse de Commerce – Pinault Collection, Paris, France (2025); *Multiplicity: Blackness in Contemporary American Collage*, Frist Art Museum, Nashville, TN (2023); *Yuen Yeung*, K11 Musea, Shanghai, China (2023); *Black Abstractionists: From Then ‘til Now*, Green Family Art Foundation, Dallas, TX (2022); *Fire Figure Fantasy: Selections*

from *ICA Miami's Collection*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL (2022); *Black Refractions: Highlights from The Studio Museum in Harlem*, Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, CA (2019), traveled to Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston, SC (2019), Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, Kalamazoo, MI (2019), Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA (2020); Frye Museum of Art, Seattle, WA (2020); and Utah Museum of Fine Art, Salt Lake City, UT (2020); *Beyond Infinity: Contemporary Art After Kusama*, Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, Boston, MA (2019); *Expanding Narratives: The Figure and the Ground*, Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL (2018); *Something to Say: The McNay Presents 100 Years of African American Art*, McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX (2018); *Picturing Mississippi, 1817-2017: Land of Plenty, Pain, and Promise*, Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson, MI (2017); *Dimensions of Black: a Collaboration with the San Diego African American Museum of Fine Art*, Museum of Contemporary San Diego, San Diego, CA (2017); *New at NOMA: Recent Acquisitions in Modern and Contemporary Art*, New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA (2017); *Through the African American Lens*, National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, D.C. (2017); *Circa 1970*, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2016); *Prospect.3: Notes for Now*, New Orleans, LA (2014); *When the Stars Begin to Fall: Imagination in the American South*, Studio Museum, Harlem, NY (2014); and *Black in the Abstract*, Contemporary Art Museum Houston, TX (2013). Binion's works were also featured prominently in the 57th Venice Biennale, *VIVA ARTE VIVA* (2017).

Binion's work is in numerous public and private collections including the Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA; Alford Collection of Contemporary Art at Rollins College, Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Winter Park, FL; Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH; Ariel Mutual Funds, Chicago, IL; Art Bridges Foundation, Bentonville, AR; Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Michigan, Detroit, MI; Children's Hospital of Michigan, Detroit, MI; City of Detroit, Detroit, MI; Cook County Hospital, Chicago, MI; Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO; De Paul Art Museum, Chicago, IL; Detroit Institute of Art, Detroit, MI; Fidelity Investments Art Collection; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL; Joyner Giuffrida Collection; Kemper Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO; McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson, MS; Morehouse College, Atlanta, GA; Mott Warsh Collection, Flint, MI; Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, FL; New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA; Phillips Collection, Washington, DC; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA), San Francisco, CA; Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; Strauss Family Collection, Santa Fe, CA; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH; Wayne State University, Detroit, MI and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY.

Artist portrait by William Jess Laird.

**Lehmann Maupin**

Rachel Lehmann and David Maupin co-founded Lehmann Maupin in 1996 in New York. Since inception, Lehmann Maupin has served as a leading contemporary art gallery with locations in the U.S., Europe, and Asia. For over 25 years, Lehmann Maupin has been instrumental in introducing international artists in new geographies and building long-lasting curatorial relationships. Known for championing diverse voices, the gallery's program proudly features artists whose work challenges notions of identity and shapes international culture. Today, the gallery has permanent locations in New York, Seoul, and London, as well as team members throughout Asia and Europe.

**New York**

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