



## Mark Manders

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York

April 30 – July 31, 2026

For his sixth solo exhibition with the gallery, Mark Manders presents new work ranging from monumental bronze busts to abstract sculptural landscapes and discrete paintings and works on paper. Dreamlike and fragmented, these new pieces populate the gallery like a series of thoughts to which the artist gave form and then froze in time. Experienced together, the works form a kind of scenography of the mind for the visitor to move through and inhabit.

Over the course of his thirty-year career, Manders has centered his practice on the creation of poetic and paradoxical fictional worlds. In Manders' installations past, present, and future exist simultaneously, gravity is at once emphasized and defied, the boundaries between painting and sculpture are permeable, and language is simultaneously all-powerful and insufficient. In his work, experiences that are universal and yet indescribable like melancholy, are given powerful form. Serving less as evidence of his own life, thoughts, and existence, Manders sees the scenes, environments, and individual works he creates more as tools to explore the idea of subjectivity itself.

In keeping with his interest in an object that can represent or explore subjectivity, the bust is an archetypal form for the artist, and in the ground floor exhibition space Manders presents, *Bonewhite Clay Head with Vertical-Cloud*, a large-scale head that appears to be made from cracked white clay. The dry, white, fissured surface is a color and texture that is unplaceable, both ancient-seeming and otherworldly. In the past, Manders has made works that reference the distinct and physically tactile materiality of clay and its transitional phases. Some forms, painted to appear as wet clay, have even been covered in plastic sheeting to further the illusion of soft vulnerability and give the sense that their maker has only recently departed. Later works have appeared dry and cracked and even surrounded by fake dust in order to present the illusion of dryness; still fragile, but ultimately realistic. This new phase of material suggests the unattainable ideal, an archetype of form, a surface of clay pulled out of a dream by the artist, existing in some alternative version of reality, or from another era.

*Monument*, a giant female head made of painted bronze, sits near *Bonewhite Clay Head with Vertical-Cloud*, its texture the same cracked white. A lump is attached to the figure's throat, and it sits in silent stillness. Manders made this work as a monument for his mother who lost a baby just after birth, and for all who have experienced grief that had to remain silent. The lump sits on the figure's throat, like words caught on their way to expression, but bound to the woman, unable to break free, yet made visible.

The bone-white color of these monumental sculptures recurs throughout the show as both a formal and conceptual through line. A paradox in itself, white is at once all colors of the spectrum and perceived as blank. Manders uses the color in a series of paintings and wall works that are framed by newspapers he

made himself. Titled *All Existing Words*, the newspapers are a printed series that contain all existing English words, used only once and placed in random order. Working with all of language and all of color, Manders presents a spare and arresting series of paintings with dimensional frames made of newspaper, almost like windows. That a painting might be a window is a foundational art historical idea, here played upon with the addition of the artist's newspaper as the windowsill or frame, or papered over on the surface. Newspapers themselves seem to exist out of time—nearly relics in our digital age. Their inclusion marks another way Manders places his work in an ambiguous chronology.

Paint and newspapers recur in the artist's landscapes, where he also introduces the color blue. In *Field Fragment*, tiny tiles of blue in different shades represent the sky at different moments. Attached to a small metal rod that hovers like a horizon line over a bed of sand, the amount of paint used on each side is carefully balanced so that the line of blue hangs in equilibrium. Referencing Cubism in his use of multiple perspectives at once, and Dutch landscape painting's effort to capture the sky's many shades, Manders' scene is a quiet and melancholic fusion of different moments. Gravity is an essential part of the composition of *Field Fragment* and is also felt in an untitled work installed nearby, in which a block of the artist's newspaper with all existing words seems to be falling through the sky, caught in a moment before hitting the ground.

A series of smaller scale bronze busts, painted to look like clay, populate the gallery, each one silent and still. Many of these works are fragmentary—missing an arm or an ear, or seemingly partially cracked and crumbling. They almost appear to be archeological relics, but on closer inspection they are, like the monumental heads downstairs, unplaceable, existing only as a result of the artist's fictional world building.

Born in 1968 in Volkel, The Netherlands, Manders currently lives and works in Ronse, Belgium. Winner of the 2002 Philip Morris Art Prize, Manders also received the prestigious Dr. A.H. Heineken Prize for Art in 2010.

Important solo exhibitions include *Mindstudy*, Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar, Netherlands (2025); *Mark Manders*, Fondazione Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy (2024); *The Absence of Mark Manders*, Woning Van Wassenhove, Sint-Martens-Latem, Belgium (2023); *The Absence of Mark Manders* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2021); *Double Silence* at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan (2020); *Mark Manders: Cose in corso* at Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia, Italy (2014); *Mark Manders* at Centro Galego de Arte Contemporanea, Santiago de Compostela, Spain (2014); *Les études d'ombres*, Carré d'Art - Musée d'art contemporain, Nîmes, France (2012); *Revisions: Mark Manders*, Carrillo Gil Museum of Art, Mexico City (2011); *Parallel Occurrences / Documented Assignments*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2010), which traveled to the Aspen Art Museum, Colorado, The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, and the Dallas Museum of Art (2010-2012); *Two Interconnected Houses*, La Casa Luis Barragán, Mexico City, Mexico; and *The Absence of Mark Manders*, which opened at Kunstverein Hanover, Germany in 2007, and traveled to S.M.A.K. in Ghent, Belgium, Kunsthaus Zurich, and Bergen Kunsthall, Norway through 2009. The

artist's work has also been exhibited at the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, the Art Institute of Chicago, and Pinakothek der Modern in Munich, among others.

Mark Manders' notable public art commissions include the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis (2017) and Rokin Square in Amsterdam (2017). In 2019, he was commissioned by the Public Art Fund to create a large sculpture for Doris C. Freedman Plaza in New York's Central Park.

In 2013, Manders represented the Netherlands at the Venice Biennale. He was also included in the Ateliers de Rennes (2016), Athens Biennial (2007), Manifesta (2004), documenta (2002), and the Venice Biennale (2001).

Manders' work can be found in the permanent collections of The Art Institute of Chicago, Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, Kunsthaus Zürich, Museum of Modern Art in New York, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, among many others.

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