

HAUSER & WIRTH

Press Release

Mark Bradford My Head Became a Rock

Hauser & Wirth Zürich

15 June – 26 July 2014

Opening: Saturday 14 June, 6 – 8 pm

Hauser & Wirth is proud to present 'My Head Became a Rock', Mark Bradford's inaugural exhibition with the gallery featuring a body of entirely new work. Best recognised for expansive multilayered collaged paintings incorporating materials found in the urban environment, for this exhibition Bradford has created a series of works based on the work of French artist Gustave Caillebotte. Economic exchange and socio-politics are abstracted through a geometry that infuses the matrix of lines with notions of labour and class systems.

Bradford draws inspiration from Caillebotte's life and work, including 'Raboteurs de parquet' (1875) in the Musée d'Orsay collection, a painting of everyday life and the urban working class in Paris, painted from a high vantage point. Bradford has always had a close connection to the community that initially fuelled – and continues to drive – his artistic practice. There is an undeniable authenticity in his work, where what happens in the studio is not far removed from what happens outside the studio, much like the way that Caillebotte was working at the end of the 19th century in Paris. Both artists' work asks us to question our social responsibility and place in the world.

In the Caillebotte painting 'Raboteurs de parquet', three workmen – on all fours – sand and polish an expansive drawing room floor. During this process the floor becomes a canvas of scratched and sanded lines caught in the light from the balcony doors. Using this painting as a point of departure foregrounds Bradford's experimentation with process, as he mimics the technique of Caillebotte's labourers, simultaneously building and expunging surface areas of thick impasto, creating abstracted sections of varying patinas.

The palette of this new group of work is limited to a range of colours and shades drawn from the found materials Bradford uses in his paintings – primarily paper – which he gathers from the area around his studio in Leimert Park, Los Angeles. Bradford is known for his use of collage/decollage which he builds up into intricate and mysterious layers of form and lines from found materials including string, carbon paper, billboard paper and industrial sanders.



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Bradford's expansive and multilayered works in this show often recall puzzles or floorboards, pulled apart segments which are subsequently put back together again. The artist's materials are always representational – yet they never add up to a readily recognisable form. Bradford has an ongoing interest in cartography and space exploration, but here he traces routes on a more domestic scale; footsteps across a room, rudimentary builders' tools which sand a floor and the grain and placement of wooden boards themselves.

Bradford's monumental visually-engaging works are indebted to modernism but are still linked to their materials – both through their construction and their titles. His method becomes part of the real world service industries and connected to the ways in which society is always changing around us, including through advertising, construction and the digital world, which defines his practice in the history of painting. In paintings such as 'Cracks Between The Floorboards' and 'Single Umbrella', segments of gestural dark sections are sanded and cut back to reveal glimpses of bright colour creeping out from the underlying layers. Barely visible beneath the obliterated surface, fragments of text and numerals emerge, recalling billboards and digital communications.



'Bradford shares with Newman, Pollock, and Rothko an elemental desire to represent that which lacks form, but while his predecessors' subjects are notional, fugitive, and necessarily formless, Bradford's subjects – his ideas about places and about the people and the networks that constitute and bind them – lack not form, for there is an abundance of imagery on hand, but rather a coherent face, a recognised identity. But where Bradford departs most sharply from his forebears is in his complete

rejection of sublimity and in his insistence that through his process, a complex socially grounded subject can become 'known'.¹



All works featured in the exhibition 'My Head Became a Rock' are fully illustrated in an accompanying special limited edition book and art object. Enclosed in a linen-bound case, the edition will take the form of a Z-fold featuring Bradford's latest works including his 10-part series entitled 'Floor Scrapers'. In addition, a large-scale reproduction of a single work, folding out like a map, will form the especially exciting component of the publication. This unique foldout has a tactile, handcrafted quality, which is materially engaging.

1. Christopher Bedford, 'Mark Bradford', Wexner Center for the Arts, Yale University Press 2010, p. 27

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About the Artist

Mark Bradford was born in 1961 in Los Angeles, where he lives and works. He has exhibited widely and has participated in solo shows including, 'You're Nobody (Til Somebody Kills You)', a large-scale survey of Bradford's work presented at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus OH in 2010, before travelling to the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston MA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago IL; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas TX, and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco CA. Notable group presentations include: the Gwangju Biennale (2012), 12th Istanbul Biennial (2011), Seoul Biennial (2010), the Carnegie International (2008), São Paulo Biennial (2006), and Whitney Biennial (2006). Solo exhibitions include Aspen Art Museum, Aspen CO (2011); 'Maps and Manifests', Cincinnati Museum of Art, Cincinnati OH (2008), and 'Neither New Nor Correct' at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York NY (2007).

In 2013, Bradford was elected as a National Academician and he was awarded the MacArthur Fellowship in 2009. In September 2014, Bradford will present a solo exhibition at the Rose Art Museum in Waltham MA, which will tour to The Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, Netherlands in 2015. 'Bell Tower', a large-scale multimedia installation created by the artist specifically for the Tom Bradley International Terminal at LAX Airport, Los Angeles CA will debut in Fall 2014. In early 2015, Bradford will also unveil a new body of work at The Rockbund Art Museum in Shanghai, China and present a solo exhibition at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles CA.

Current & Forthcoming Exhibitions:

Anna Maria Maiolino
'Between Senses'
7 May – 21 June 2014
Hauser & Wirth New York, 69th Street

Sterling Ruby
'SUNRISE SUNSET'
9 May – 25 July 2014,
Hauser & Wirth New York, 18th Street

Phyllida Barlow
'Fifty Years of Drawings'
23 May – 26 July 2014
Hauser & Wirth London

Richard Jackson
'New Paintings'
23 May – 26 July 2014
Hauser & Wirth London

Louise Bourgeois
'L'araignée et les tapisseries'
15 June – 26 July 2014
Hauser & Wirth Zürich

'The Photographic Object, 1970'
26 June – 25 July 2014
Hauser & Wirth New York, 69th Street

Phyllida Barlow
'GIG'
15 July – 2 November 2014
Hauser & Wirth Somerset

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Cracks Between The Floorboards
2014
Mixed media collage on canvas
335.3 x 304.8 x 5.5 cm / 132 x 120 x
2 1/8 in

My Head Became a Rock
2014
Mixed media collage on canvas
335.3 x 304.8 x 5.5 cm / 132 x 120 x
2 1/8 in

When You Have It, Your Final Price
Will be Less
2014
Mixed media collage on canvas
335.28 x 304.8 x 5.5 cm / 132 x 120 x
2 1/8 in

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