

## Charles Gaines

MARCH 31 – APRIL 30, 2016  
534 W 21ST STREET

NEW YORK – The Paula Cooper Gallery is pleased to present a group of eight new large-scale triptychs by Charles Gaines, entitled *Numbers and Trees: Central Park Series I*. The works constitute a continuation of this prolific artist's acclaimed series, *Numbers and Trees*, begun in 1987. The exhibition will be on view at 534 West 21st Street from March 31 through April 30, 2016. There will be an opening reception on March 31 from 6 – 8 pm.

For more than forty years, Charles Gaines' art has explored the relationship between aesthetics, politics, language and systems. Gaines employs rule-based methodologies to investigate ways in which meaning can be experienced in images and words. Informed by sources as varied as Tantric Buddhist drawings, the systemized work of Hanne Darboven, and John Cage's notions of indeterminacy, Gaines creates work that often employs plotting and mathematics to organize visual components. While appearing systematic and scientific, Gaines's works ultimately refrain from producing empirical knowledge, preferring instead to invoke the viewer's subjective response. They explore an individual's perception, expression and speculative thought, as they operate both within and against a system.

Charles Gaines's new work, *Numbers and Trees: Central Park Series I*, marks an extension of his early interest in serialized projects. For each of his eight triptychs, Gaines divides and mounts a black and white photograph of a tree in Central Park, taken at the time of the artist's 2014 exhibition at the Studio Museum in Harlem. Enclosing each panel within an acrylic box, screened with grids of half-inch squares, he graphs the silhouette of the tree directly onto the overlaid acrylic surface. Filling cells with vibrant paint, Gaines plots numbers to index the leaves and branches of each tree; he begins at the center of the trunk, counting outward in both directions to create a pixelated image guided by a numerical system. As the series progresses, the catalog of previous trees, each denoted by a different hue, appears on every subsequent triptych, resulting in a prismatic kaleidoscope of layered colors. The cumulative effect bridges the expressive sublime with the schematic referent.

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