

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**JOEL KYACK***On the Floor in the Cave of Skulls*

April 9 – May 14, 2016

Ghebaly Gallery is pleased to present *On the Floor in the Cave of Skulls*, an exhibition by Joel Kyack featuring new sculptural fountain works and recent paintings. This show marks the artist's third solo presentation with the gallery.

Beginning with one of his earliest performative works, *The Dam* (2006), Kyack's practice has been the result of an aggressive refusal to resist the natural resolution of materials, forms, and ideas. With this piece, a photograph of a performance that casts Kyack waist-deep in the middle of a swollen river while holding a broad plank of wood perpendicular to the rushing current, he reveals the futility of working against the charging force of nature. At the same time, the image is an allegory for the artist's position within social constructs. With this piece, Kyack succinctly establishes a paradigm for his overall practice and introduces his use of running water as subject matter and material.

In subsequent bodies of work, Kyack introduces a cast of characters that urinate, spit, and swallow who commingle with dismembered prosthetic limbs, gravestones, kiddie pools, and assorted knives. Liquids move into, around, and over many of his sculptural works, with water finding its way through any available orifice. This is especially evident in works like *The Waterfall*, a video and photo piece from 2008 and 2013 respectively, in which Kyack himself becomes a vessel, simultaneously ingesting and excreting fluids through his own biological processes in front of a camera. The visceral nature of this gesture points to the artist's tendency towards the grotesque. The dormant violence that is intrinsic to many of his objects is made palpable in performances like *Growing Pains Leave Stains* (2011) and *Your Optimism Fills Graves* (2015). In these works, Kyack is a singular performer amid an arsenal of props, sculptures, and materials that he splatters, stabs, squirts, and sprays in gesticulating throes.

For *On the Floor in the Cave of Skulls*, Kyack has constructed new sculptural works from his fountain series. These fountains are an amalgamation of disparate materials sourced from thrift shops, hardware stores, and bargain bins that are pieced together to create a closed loop that allows water to cycle throughout each discrete piece. Every object employed has its own unique surface tension, bending and conforming to the artist's will only insofar as its material qualities will permit. When combined, the staunch pragmatism of the surreal assemblages allows them to maintain their materiality while also surrendering some of their signification in favor of a more subversive cause. This duality frees the sculptures to move beyond discussions of traditional aesthetics and into a complex discourse surrounding the body in relation to a ludicrously anxious social reality.

In addition to the fountain works, the exhibition includes a selection of Kyack's recent paintings, which echo the logic of the fountains but with an economy of signs. The visual similes and puns that result from the connection of incongruent – or sometimes all too apparent – associations highlight the dark humor that permeates across his practice, where aesthetics are often subservient to practicality, where primitivism campaigns for art's potential as an unsophisticated wilderness.

Joel Kyack (b. 1972, Pennsylvania, USA) lives and works in Los Angeles. Kyack received his MFA from the University of Southern California in 2008 and attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2004. Recent solo projects include *The Very First Day*, Workplace Gallery, Gateshead, UK (2015); *Old Sailors Never Die*, Francois Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles (2014); *Point at the Thing That's Furthest Away*, Praz-Delavallade, Paris (2013); *Terms / Proposals / Demands*, SSZ Sued, Köln, Germany (2013); *Escape to Shit Mountain* at Francois Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles (2012); *Superclogger*, a public project produced in collaboration with LA><ART and The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2010); and *The Knife Shop*, Kunsthalle · LA, Los Angeles (2009). Recent performances include *Your Optimism Fills Graves*, Workplace, London (2015); *Buy What I Say*, FIAC, Paris (2014); *Growing Pains Leave Stains*, Kaleidoscope ARENA, Macro Testaccio, Rome, Italy (2011); and *Wattis Up with this Guy?*, Wattis Institute, San Francisco (2011).

JOEL KYACK

Born 1972, America, Lives and works in Los Angeles

#### EDUCATION

2008 M.F.A., University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA  
2004 Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, East Madison, ME  
1995 B.F.A., Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI  
1994 European Honors Program, RISD, Rome, Italy  
1992 Boston University, Boston, MA

#### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2016 (Upcoming) Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
Workplace Gallery, Solo booth, Art Basel Hong Kong, Hong Kong  
2015 *The Very First Day*, Workplace Gallery, Gateshead, UK Praz-Delavallade, Solo booth, Independent, New York, NY  
2014 *Buy What I Say*, Performance, FIAC, Paris  
François Ghebaly, Solo booth, FIAC, Paris  
*Old Sailors Never Die*, François Ghebaly, Los Angeles, CA  
2013 *Point at The Thing That's Furthest Away*, Praz-Delavallade, Paris, France  
*Terms / Proposals / Demands*, SSZ Sued, Köln, Germany  
2012 *Most Games Are Lost, Not Won*, Frieze Projects, Frieze NY  
2011 *Escape to Shit Mountain*, François Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
*River / Stream / In-Between*, Kate Werble Gallery, New York, NY  
2010 *Flow, River, Flow!*, NADA Art Fair, Miami, FL  
*Superclogger*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA  
*Superclogger*, Ongoing public project with LA><ART, Los Angeles, CA  
2009 *The Knife Shop*, Kunsthalle LA with François Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
2008 *Design a Future or Fuck It*, USC Roski Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
2007 *Proposition for a New Mountaineer*, USC Roski Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

#### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2015 *Under Construction*, Paramo, Guadalajara, Mexico  
*COOL - As a State of Mind* (curated by C. Cosson & E. Luciani), MAMO - Centre d'Art de la Cité Radieuse, Marseille, France  
2014 *The Dirty Poke Ain't No Joke*, Performance at Greystone Gala, LA><ART, Los Angeles, CA  
*On Stage* (curated by Lorenzo Bruni), KARST, Plymouth, United Kingdom  
2013 *Always Yours, Des Objets Manqués, Des Monuments*, Balice Hertling Gallery, Paris, France  
*True Believers*, Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA  
*Painting Party*, Human Resources, Los Angeles, CA  
2012 *Your History Is Our History*, Praz-Delavallade Gallery, Paris, France  
Art Basel Miami Beach, with Praz-Delavallade, Miami, FL  
*Out of Sight, Out of Mind*, Workplace Gallery, Gateshead, UK  
Frieze New York, NY with François Ghebaly Gallery, New York, NY  
*Cave-IN*, Ramiken Crucible (NYC), Cueva Archillas, Puerto Rico  
Art Cologne, Germany with François Ghebaly Gallery, Cologne, Germany  
*Los Angeles Contemporary Tendencies* (Curated by Annka Kultys), Helene Bailly Gallery, Paris, FR,  
2011 *American Exuberance*, Rubell Family Collection, Miami, FL  
*Trespass / Parade*, West of Rome, Los Angeles, CA  
*Adult Contemporary / Family Romance*, Kavi Gupta, Berlin, Germany  
*God Only Knows Who the Audience Is*, CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco, CA  
*The Shortest Distance Between Two Points is Often Intolerable*, curated by Andrew Berardini, Brand New Gallery, Milan, Italy  
*Synthetic Ritual*, Pitzer Art Gallery, Pitzer College, Claremont, CA  
2010 *Who Is Your Audience*, curated by Lorenzo Bruni, Astuni Public Studio, Bologna, Italy  
*Dead Letter Office*, Annual Benefit Auction, LACE, Los Angeles, CA  
2009 *Not Los Angeles*, Fellows of Cotemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA  
*Perform! Now!*, performance festival, Chinatown, Los Angeles, CA  
*Desert Sexy*, The Constant Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
*Material Boundaries*, Deborah Page Projects, Austin, TX  
2008 *California Biennial*, High Desert Test Sites, Joshua Tree, CA  
*Allan Kaprow-Art as Life*, Graft re-Happening (in collaboration with Lee Lynch), Museum of Contemporary Art,

- Los Angeles, CA  
*The Silence of Infinite Space*, Glendale College Gallery, Glendale, CA  
*One Shot: 100><100, La><ART*, Los Angeles, CA  
*Host*, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA  
*8 is Enough*, USC Roski Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
2007 *My Buddy*, UCLA Wight Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
*I Do You Do Me*, USC Roski Gallery, Los Angeles, CA  
2006 *I Never Meant to Hurt You*, Buzzer Thirty, Queens, NY  
*Material Matters*, Maryland Art Place, Baltimore, MD  
*Make Over*, Tastes Like Chicken, Brooklyn, NY  
2004 *High Desert Test Sites*, Joshua Tree, CA  
*re:source*, Art in General, New York, NY  
Skowhegan Projects, Skowhegan State Fair, ME  
*Rowdy Remix*, ATM, New York, NY  
*Parakeet Salon No. 2*, The Parakeet Salon, Brooklyn, NY  
*Spring Fling*, The Trash Compactor, Brooklyn, NY  
2002 *Parakeet Salon No. 1*, The Parakeet Salon, Brooklyn, NY  
*Smokey Wind*, Fume Room, Providence, RI

#### PERFORMANCES

- 2015 *Landed*, ALL THE INSTRUMENTS AGREE: an exhibition or a concert, The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA  
2012 *Human Resources*, Los Angeles, CA  
*Landed w/ Dawn Kasper*, Whitney Museum of Art, New York, NY  
2011 *Growing Pains Leave Stains*, Kaleidoscope ARENA, Macro Testaccio, Rome, Italy  
*Wattis Up with this Guy?*, Wattis Institute, San Francisco, CA  
*Queering Sex* (w/ Dawn Kasper and Street Buddy), Human Resources, Los Angeles, CA  
*Cowboys Don't Care*, Brand New Gallery, Milan, Italy  
2010 *Crossing the Line*, Piazza de Nettuno, Bologna, Italy  
2009 *Hill Street Blues*, Perform! Now! festival, Francois Ghebaly, Los Angeles, CA  
*Knifemasters 2009*, The MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, NH  
2008 *Genesis Project 2008*, workshop, Sea and Space Explorations, Los Angeles, CA  
*Feel the Love 2008*, w/ Jack Wilmarth, Machine Project, Los Angeles, CA  
*The Waterfall*, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA

#### COMMISSIONS

- 2012 *Most games are lost, not won*, Special Project, curated by Cecilia Alemani, Frieze Fair, New York, NY

#### RESIDENCIES

- 2011 Cite Internationale des Arts, Paris, France  
2009 The MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, NH  
2002 Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT

#### LECTURES / PANELS

- 2012 Visiting Lecturer, New Genres, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA  
2011 Visiting Lecturer, Ecole Supérieure d'Art de l'Agglomération d'Annecy, Annecy, France Visiting Lecturer, Pomona College, Pomona, CA  
2010 Panelist, Super Public: Performance en route, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA  
Visiting Lecturer / Graduate Sculpture Critic, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ  
Visiting Lecturer, Chaffey College, Rancho Cucamonga, CA  
Visiting Lecturer, Oakwood Academy, Los Angeles, CA  
2009 Visiting Lecturer, Sculpture, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA  
2001 Visiting Lecturer, Architecture Department, University of Detroit Mercy, Detroit, MI

#### PUBLICATIONS

- Breaking Point*, Joel Kyack, 2014 Frieze Art Fair NYC 2012, Frieze, 2012  
*American Exuberance*, Rubell Family Collection, 2011 *Synthetic Ritual*, Pitzer College, 2011  
*A chi ti stai rivolgendoti*, MAT edizioni, Astuni Public Studio, 2010

High Desert Test Sites CB08, published for the 2008 California Biennial, 2008  
Design a Future or Fuck It, University of Southern California, 2008  
Material Matters, Maryland Art Place, Baltimore, MD, 2006  
Don't Cry Mr. Robot, self-published chapbook, 2003

#### SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Owens, Laura, "Every Rough Edge is Gone", *Flash Art*, January / February 2014  
Williams, Maxwell, "An Artist's Exploration of The Various Points of Decay", *Flaunt Magazine*, July 2012  
Gopnik, Blake, "At art's cattle market, Joel Kyack provides simple pleasures", *The Daily Beast*, May 4, 2012  
Nathan, Emily, "Frieze Projects 2012", *artnet*, May 2012  
McLean-Ferris, Laura, "Frieze: London's finest art fair goes stateside," *The Independent*, May 7, 2012  
Schonberger, Nick, "Joel Kyack's 'Most games are lost, not won'", *Complex*, May 7, 2012  
Wetzler, Rachel, "Frieze New York: The Art Outside the Tent", *Rhizome*, May 9, 2012  
Jovanovic, Rozalia, "At Frieze Projects, Toss a Ball, See Tumbleweeds", *GalleristNY*, May 4, 2012  
Williams, Sarah, "Virtual Walkthrough of 'Escape to Shit Mountain, *ForYourArt*, September 15, 2011  
Goldstein, Andrew M., "Editor's Picks", *Artinfo.com*, May 5, 2011  
Birnbaum, Brent, "Featured Artist: Joel Kyack", *Artcards*, Feb. 8 2011  
"NADA Best Booth Prize Awarded to Two Galleries", *ArtInfo*, December 2 2010  
Hanks, Douglas, "A sandwich that's a fountain and more good ideas at NADA", *The Miami Herald*, December 2, 2010  
Pacoda, Pierfrancesco, "Tra pubblico e privato, Kyack ci mette una fontana", *Il Resto di Carlino*, October 13, 2010  
Ned Holte, Michael, "Best of 2010", *Artforum*, December 2010  
"Tra pubblico e privato, Kyack ci mette una Fontana", *Bologna Italy Newspaper*, October 2010  
Berardini, Andrew, "Joel Kyack: Superclogger", *Art Review*, Issue 44, September 2010  
Ulaby, Neda, "'Superclogger': Free Theater on L.A.'s Freeways", *National Public Radio (NPR)*, August 11, 2010  
Harvey, Steve, "In search of a monument that says 'LA' ", *Los Angeles Times*, July 10, 2010  
KTLA, July 2010  
Mizota, Sharon, "'Superclogger': Puppet shows for the congested freeways of L.A.", *Los Angeles Times*, June 11, 2010  
Myers, Holly, "Drive-By Spectacles", *Los Angeles Times*, June 6, 2010  
Off-Ramp, "Puppets on the 405: Joel Kyack's Superclogger", *KPCC*, June 05, 2010  
Berardini, Andrew, "The Masculine Mystique", *Angeleno*, April 2010  
Berardini, Andrew, "The Infinitude of the Private Man", *Mousse Magazine*, Issue 23, March 2010  
Cotter, Holland, "Art in Review; 'I Never Meant to Hurt You'", *New York Times*, May 5, 2006  
Stillman, Nick, "Rowdy Remix", *Artforum.com Online Picks*, June 10, 2004