

## HAUSER & WIRTH

### Press Release

## Paul McCarthy WS Spinoffs, Wood Statues, Brown Rothkos

Hauser & Wirth Los Angeles, North A gallery  
1 July – 17 September 2017  
Opening reception: Saturday 1 July, 6 – 9 pm



**Los Angeles...** Hauser & Wirth is pleased to announce 'Paul McCarthy. WS Spinoffs, Wood Statues, Brown Rothkos,' the gallery's first exhibition in Los Angeles devoted to the provocative and influential work of acclaimed LA-based artist Paul McCarthy. Opening 1 July, this exhibition presents 'spinoffs' from White Snow, a major ongoing project within the artist's multidisciplinary practice that subverts the beloved 19th century German folktale 'Schneewittchen' (Snow White) and the modern interpretation of that story in Disney's 1937 animated classic 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.' Never before exhibited in Los Angeles, the works on view – 9 monumental carved black walnut sculptures of Snow White, the Prince, and Dopey, alongside arresting wall hangings – seek to disrupt traditional notions of art and culture, while introducing viewers to McCarthy's tireless exploration of mediums.

The exhibition is on view through 17 September 2017.

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### About the Exhibition

Over the past 50 years, Paul McCarthy has committed his practice to performance, photography, painting, sculpture, film, and installation, to 'propos[e] that reality itself can fluctuate.' His protean oeuvre has stirred lively debate, raising critical questions about accepted norms. Connecting seemingly disparate bodies of work through humor, derision, and art historical parallels, McCarthy undermines America's projected normalcy, pitting archetypal narratives against the messier realities of human drives and desires. Family systems, along with mass media and its effects on the development of children, are at the center of a sprawling practice that focuses on smashing society's double standards and hypocrisies.

The theme of Snow White first appeared publicly in McCarthy's work in 2009, with an exhibition of 'White Snow' drawings that became the basis for a group of sculptures presented in his 2011 exhibition 'The Dwarves, The Forest' at Hauser & Wirth New York. This landmark exhibition featured a series of black bronze dwarves, sculpted from earlier drawings, an important starting point in the exploration of the artist's White Snow project.



In his new exhibition at Hauser & Wirth Los Angeles, Snow White and her cohorts are transmuted through a process that begins with commercially produced, collectible Disney figurines – totems of unstintingly perfect proportions. Through McCarthy's laborious, performative approach, those 'tchotchkes' are freed from their original predetermined ratios, as if released from societal repression and infantilization. With their gaping mouths, twisting necks, and multiplying heads, the twelve sculptures on view harken to the dynamism of classical Baroque sculpture and pay tribute to the history of classicism.

To create the massive works on view, McCarthy took to the computer, employing digital mapping and combining to explore possibilities of scale, variation, repetition, and merging. To realize these works, small pieces of black walnut were assembled into massive blocks, then precisely machine-cut and hand-sanded. Variations in grain allow for impressive grid-like patterning that reveals the remarkable marquetry of each colossal sculpture.

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Utilizing his staged process of producing 'abstracts through merging,' McCarthy crossbreeds beloved cultural characters to restructure reality. 'White Snow, Bookends' (2013), the largest work in the exhibition, which weighs a total of 36,000 pounds, is a two-part sculpture depicting the Prince and White Snow on horseback. His eyes are closed and her mouth falls open in seemingly arrested pleasure or pain. 'WS, White Snow and Prince on Horseback, Merger, Transformation, Mutation' (2015), amalgamates the subjects' appendages into a hyperbolic composite: the three horses gallop on 12 legs, White Snow shrieks from two visible mouths, and the Prince's head is larger than that of his surging stallion. With 'WS, White Snow Dopey Dopey Head, Ten Feet' (2013 – 2014), White Snow's lips, grotesquely enlarged, swallow the head of a duplicated dwarf.



Here, McCarthy has become the producer of a parallel Hollywood, employing tactics of the film industry to recast adored icons in deviant roles. Behind the endearing, prepackaged Disney façade that dictates the American surface lurk wild, untamed urges that McCarthy unleashes with deftness and humor.

The exhibition presents these works in juxtaposition with a group of McCarthy's Brown Rothkos, sculptural, monochromatic wall hangings comprised of carpet covered in foam and sprayable polyurethane coating. Carpet, a regularly used ground material supporting the artist's large-scale performative installations, has been 'elevated' here from the floor to the walls, and repurposed as a medium for expression. During the making of the vast set for 'WS,' McCarthy's monumental multimedia work presented at the Park Avenue Armory in 2013, McCarthy intentionally placed carpets under the forest's fantastical trees, allowing residue from their fabrication to adhere to the surface of the carpets. As the individual trees were rotated and sprayed with coating, the foam and polyurethane dropped onto the carpets, a deliberate action orchestrated by the artist. Over the course of the formation of the forest, McCarthy examined the carpets and moved them accordingly to achieve desired variations in surface, texture, and thickness. The final collection of specifically selected wall hangings on view in this exhibition showcases the boundlessness of McCarthy's own performance as 'artist' and the purposeful transfer of energy leading to an ensuing action of calculated creation.

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## About the Artist

Born in 1945 in Salt Lake City, Utah, Paul McCarthy is one of the most important and influential contemporary American artists. McCarthy studied art at the University of Utah and went on to receive a BFA in painting at the San Francisco Art Institute in 1969. He studied film, video and art at the University of Southern California, receiving an MFA in 1972. From 1982 to 2002, he taught performance, video, installation and performance art history at the University of California, Los Angeles. Recent solo exhibitions include 'WS & CSSC, Drawings and Paintings', Fundació Gaspar, Barcelona, Spain (2017), 'Paul McCarthy: White Snow, Wood Sculptures', Henry Art Gallery, Seattle WA (2016), 'Paul McCarthy. Drawings', The Renaissance Society, Chicago IL (2015); Volksbühne, Berlin, Germany (2015); Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin, Germany (2015); 'Inbetween. Baselitz – McCarthy', Economou Collection, Athens, Greece (2015); 'Paul McCarthy. Spin Offs: White Snow WS, Caribbean Pirates CP', Hauser & Wirth Zürich, Switzerland (2015); 'Chocolate Factory', Monnaie de Paris, Paris, France (2014) and 'Paul McCarthy – WS SC', Hauser & Wirth London (2014). Paul McCarthy lives and works in Los Angeles CA.

'Paul McCarthy. WS Spinoffs, Wood Statues, Brown Rothkos' will be on view at Hauser & Wirth Los Angeles daily from Wednesday – Sunday, 11 am – 6 pm from 1 July through 17 September 2017.

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Gallery hours:  
Wednesday – Sunday  
11 am – 6 pm

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Paul McCarthy  
WS, White Snow and Prince on Horseback,  
Merger, Transformation, Mutation  
2015  
Black walnut  
398.1 x 192.4 x 365.8 cm / 156 3/4 x 75 3/4 x  
144 in  
Photo: Mark Woods

Paul McCarthy  
WS, Bookends  
2013  
Black walnut  
Bookends (Horizontal) (12-): 365.8 x 304 x 444 cm  
/ 144 x 119 5/8 x 174 3/4 in (overall dimensions)  
Bookends (Vertical) (14-): 444 x 303.7 x 365.8 cm  
/ 174 3/4 x 119 5/8 x 144 in (overall dimensions)  
Installation view, 'Paul McCarthy. Sculptures,'  
Hauser & Wirth, New York NY, 2013  
Photo: Genevieve Hanson

Paul McCarthy  
WS, White Snow Dopey Dopey Head, Ten Feet  
2013-2014  
Black walnut  
304.8 x 236.2 x 279.4 cm / 120 x 93 x 110 in  
Base dimensions: 236.2 x 180.3 cm / 93 x 71 in  
Photo: Farzad Owrang

Paul McCarthy  
WS, White Snow Dopey Dream Double (detail)  
2015  
Black walnut  
231.4 x 227.1 x 304.8 cm / 91 1/8 x 89 3/8 x  
120 in  
Photo: Mark Woods