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LA INVITATIONAL

CHRIS BURDEN, FRANK GEHRY, PIERO GOLIA, MARK GROTJAHN, THOMAS HOUSEAGO, ALEX ISRAEL, MIKE KELLEY, NANCY RUBINS, STERLING RUBY, ED RUSCHA, ROBERT THERRIEN, JEFF WALL, MARY WEATHERFORD, JONAS WOOD

Opening reception:
Thursday, October 26, 6–8PM
October 26–December 16, 2017

555 West 24th Street
New York, NY 10011

Gagosian is pleased to present “LA Invitational,” a wide-ranging exhibition of works by Los Angeles-based artists Chris Burden, Frank Gehry, Piero Golia, Mark Grotjahn, Thomas Houseago, Alex Israel, Mike Kelley, Nancy Rubins, Sterling Ruby, Ed Ruscha, Robert Therrien, Jeff Wall, Mary Weatherford, and Jonas Wood. Many works have been made specifically for this exhibition, while others are being shown in New York for the first time.

In the popular imagination, the cultural motor of Los Angeles has always been rooted in Hollywood. The exchange between the movie business and the visual arts, however, has had notable impacts on both worlds—clearly discernible in the works of artists such as Kelley, Ruscha, and Israel. From the 1950s, as the entertainment industry increasingly required industrial, artisanal, and artistic skills such as set painting, animation, modeling, and editing, generations of dedicated visual artists both resisted and participated in Los Angeles’s far-

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reaching cultural boom during the city's transformation into one of the world's most influential industrial, economic, and creative capitals.

The landscape of southern California serves as a catalyst for fantasy, from its modernist architecture to its otherworldly rock formations, trees, coastline, mountains, and hills from which twinkling towns and cities can be viewed in the valleys below. Alex Israel's *Sky Backdrop* (2016) depicts Los Angeles's wide skies in scenographic terms, while Mary Weatherford, showing her first large-scale painting since joining Gagosian, captures the shifting atmosphere of the Pacific coast, evoking the sky and sea in painted layers and glowing, neon light. In Jeff Wall's *Property Line* (2015), two surveyors mark a patch of dirt on the outskirts of California City, located about 100 miles outside of Los Angeles, capturing the exact moment at which nature is transformed into property.

Mark Grotjahn's *Untitled (Turkish Forest V Face 43.94)* (2012) is the largest example of his iconic "face paintings" to date. The Turkish Forest series is a single work comprising eleven paintings; nine were shown together in 2014 at the Punta della Dogana in Venice. Evolving out of Grotjahn's *Butterfly* series, *Untitled (Turkish Forest V Face 43.94)* features a dichromatic scheme of red and blue oil paint, applied layer by layer with a brush and a palette knife, the colors building upon each other to an almost sculptural effect.

Chris Burden's *Three Ghost Ships* (1991)—never before exhibited in New York—is a set of full-size sailboats, fitted with solar panels and global satellite software for unmanned navigation. Burden intended that these vessels, carrying a small cargo of tea, sail together from Charleston, South Carolina, and appear miraculously in the harbor of Plymouth, England—reversing the famous journey of the Niña, the Pinta, and the Santa María, the three ships used by Christopher Columbus on his first voyage across the Atlantic, and invoking the Boston Tea Party.

The spatial and cultural freedom of Los Angeles gives rise to other kinds of exploration. Mike Kelley's *EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY PROJECTIVE RECONSTRUCTION #19 (SHY SATANIST)* (2004–05) is a video installation based on common American performance rituals: school plays, Halloween, St. Patrick's Day, award ceremonies, dress-up day at work. It is one of the thirty-two separate video chapters comprising his feature-length "musical" *Day Is Done*, first shown at Gagosian New York in 2005. Each scenario in *Day Is Done* is based on images that Kelley found in high-school yearbooks, followed by an exhaustive process of research. Using primary images as a starting point, Kelley created narrative action and music for each, like the set staging of a period Hollywood drama.

In the postwar years, the wide open spaces of Los Angeles provided a kind of freedom that allowed it to become the conceptual hub of contemporary American art that it is today. "LA Invitational" presents diverse artistic endeavors in order to reveal common threads in artistic responses to the city's landscape, culture, and light.

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Image: Jonas Wood, *Landscape Pot 2*, 2014, oil and acrylic on canvas, 120 × 76 inches (304.8 × 193 cm) © Jonas Wood. Photo by Brian Forrest.

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