

**Charles Long**

*husbands sons fathers brothers*

July 14–August 18, 2018

Tanya Bonakdar Gallery is very pleased to open its doors in Los Angeles with *husbands sons fathers brothers*, an exhibition of new sculpture by Charles Long, marking the artist's twelfth solo presentation with the gallery.

The four works which make up the exhibition were born within the circumference of the artist's major installation, *paradigm lost* currently on view in the Hammer Museum's *Made in LA*. If *paradigm lost* offers a place to contemplate a new paradigm amidst the aftermath of an imagined patriarchal apocalypse, *husbands fathers brothers sons* presents the prologue—the paradigms of identities we still must contend with before they can be properly abolished and transcended. What these two distinct bodies of work do share is a relentless common denominator: a sole motif divined by Long from an anatomical cross-section of human male genital anatomy, which also resembles a kind of ancient mask.

Each of Long's four new works are presented in their own gallery and assigned one name from the four identities within *husbands sons fathers brothers*. Long explains that "the spark that lit the fuse came when I questioned not only the patriarchal order but also the need for any identity or relationship paradigms in my life and the world I relate to. I felt more comfortable with myself with every limiting label I dispensed with. While it was one thing to become aware of and question the unexamined hereto-normative, monogamous or other hegemonic ideologies I have previously acquiesced to, when it came to my biology I was up against the mystery of my physical and chemical self. I explored this physical specificity in drawings of the cross-section of the penis, which then revealed to me a face or mask that looked back at me with its own questions. Suddenly the new work spilled out from this tear in the fabric of my being with myriad images and forms of this open body."

For *husbands*, Long has created a row of working urinal fountains, each derived from this cross-section of the penis. Water, blessed by a priest, flows out of the penile cavernosal arteries, their forms suggesting two eyes from which tears stream down to be consumed by the gaping frown taking shape in the urethra. The installation finds its inspiration in the illustrious men's room scene in John Cassavetes' 1970 eponymous film, where the main characters (three lost men) flounder in the tragic rituals that bind them together while keeping them desperately apart from one another and the women in their lives.

The birth of *sons* has its origins in a 1998 work that the artist had originally conceived of as a collaboration with his ceramicist mother shortly before she passed away. Relinquishing on the floor of the empty gallery, this tender but awkwardly wrong bundle of cut dick stalks, echoes the Freudian moments of Robert Gober. The pile of slumped massive cut phalluses which make up *fathers* visually and spiritually recall Phillip Guston. However, in actuality the work is rooted in the memories of Guston's daughter, Musa Mayer and the recollections illustrated in her phenomenal book *Night Studio*. In the memoir, Mayer bitterly surrenders her hope for familial intimacy as she repeatedly comes up against her father's "genius"—where his alienation becomes the very content and form for his late work, and in turn leads to deeper and deeper isolation as he focuses on his sole obligation: the late paintings.

The ring of dick-tree stumps comprising *brothers* derives its forms from the actual tree stump rings in the park visitor center just outside Long's Mt Baldy studio. The work simultaneously reverberates for him with a deep childhood trauma: "the circle" was a sadistic school ritual of daily beatings by the neighborhood boys. Through a recounting and understanding of our history with masculine aggression, *brothers* offers a place to sit and discuss the persistence of patriarchal transgressions and how we might transform that energy to create healing and ultimately liberating social circles everywhere.

As these works nod to Duchamp's *Fountain*, Richard Long's circular pursuits, Cassavetes' unraveling men, Gober's psychic domestic parcels, and Guston's weighty accumulations of inner burdens, *husbands sons fathers brothers* continue Long's three decade sculptural project which seeks to transcend modernism's shortcomings while learning from its architectures. The cross-sectional motif, which he here employs to playful ends, castrates the patriarchal cannon in a poetic socio-political examination of our present moment. The results are reinventions that serve as a conduit for questioning the limiting paradigms he has unconsciously acquiesced to, and a symposium for all to access the creative power of socially conscious living.

Born in 1958 in Long Branch, New Jersey, Long currently lives and works in Mt. Baldy, California. In 1981, he received a BFA from Philadelphia College of Art while also participating in the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program, and later earned an MFA from Yale University in 1988. He currently teaches as a professor in the Art Department at the University of California, Riverside.

Throughout the past two decades, Long's work has been the subject of major exhibitions worldwide. The artist is currently featured in *Made in L.A. 2018*, curated by Anne Ellegood and Erin Christovale. Long's significant solo presentations include *CATALIN* at The Contemporary Austin in Texas (2014), *Fountainhead*, a public commission in Dallas, Texas organized by the Nasher Sculpture Center (2013), *Pet Sounds* at Madison Square Park in New York City (2012), *Seeing Green*, a solo project in conjunction with *All of this and nothing: The 6th Hammer Invitational* at the UCLA Hammer Museum in Los Angeles (2011), *100 Pounds of Clay* at Orange County Museum of Art in California (2010), and *More Like a Dream Than a Scheme* at David Winton Bell Gallery at Brown University in Rhode Island, which traveled to SITE Santa Fe in New Mexico (2005).

His work was featured twice in the 1997 and 2008 Biennials at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, and has been included in notable group exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, SculptureCenter in New York, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C., Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, among many others.

His work is represented in important public and private collections worldwide, including those of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Philadelphia Museum of Art; St. Louis Art Museum, Missouri; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Magasin 3, Stockholm Konsthall; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Whitney Museum of American Art; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Denmark; Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA; Perez Art, Miami; Orange County Museum of Contemporary Art, Newport Beach, CA; Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas; Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY; and the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, CA.