

## Nari Ward to Publicly Open Lehmann Maupin's Seoul Gallery



*Correctional Circle 1280*, 2018, oak wood, copper sheet, copper nails, and darkening patina, 48 x 48 inches (diameter), 121.9 x 121.9 cm. Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul.

**Nari Ward**  
***CORRECTIONAL***  
**August 28—November 17, 2018**  
**74-18, Yulgok-ro 3-gil, Seoul**  
@lehmannmaupin | #nariward

**Opening Reception:**  
**Tuesday, August 28, 6-8 PM**

**Lehmann Maupin** is pleased to announce an exhibition of new and recent work by **Nari Ward** at Lehmann Maupin, Seoul. Launching the gallery's official exhibitions program at its Seoul location, *CORRECTIONAL* will feature sculpture, painting, and drawing for the New York-based artist's first exhibition in Korea. The works in the exhibition, along with the title, offer critical insight into the multiple associations and meanings derived from the term "correctional," which can be interpreted as both punitive and altruistic. Renowned for his ability to marry political concepts with personal identity and historical context, Ward brings forth new

meaning to notions of truth and punishment, and a true understanding of correction. **The gallery will host an opening reception for the artist on Tuesday, August 28, from 6 to 8 PM, at 74-18, Yulgok-ro 3-gil, Seoul.**

Early in his career, Ward garnered acclaim among a generation of artists who shifted the focus of contemporary art in the 1990s toward a more political tone. He developed a rigorous practice of repurposing found objects often collected in his neighborhood in Harlem, like fire hoses and baby strollers, creating juxtapositions of material that offer greater metaphorical interpretation, or social critique. Ward's personal experience of growing up in Jamaica and immigrating to the United States as a teenager informs his concerns around race, religion, class, and identity that he examines through multiple associated issues such as tourism, patriotism, and consumer culture. Ward's work embodies his multicultural perspective, offering nuanced understanding of these sociopolitical themes, with layers of interpretation accessible according to the viewer's own experiences or cultural legacy.

New works like *Correctional Circle 0128* (2018) featured in the exhibition illustrate the dichotomy found in the show's title. A continuation of the artist's longstanding *Breathing Panels* series, these abstract copper panels can be appreciated for the beauty in their formal properties, and the power within their conceptual layer. For

these latest works, Ward incorporates ghostly silhouettes of leg shackles, handcuffs, and his feet by transferring these images to the metal through a chemically created patina. The sense of confinement and escape referenced in the indicated objects is deeply connected to the central pattern found in all *Breathing Panel* works. This diamond pattern of holes surrounded by copper nails at the center of the work refers to the African prayer symbol known as a Congolese cosmogram pattern. Ward first encountered the symbol in a church, where it was explained that the designs were used as breathing holes for slaves who once had to hide there during their escape, hence the concept of the *Breathing Panel*. This symbol was originally used in Africa to describe life cycles, imparting another layer and a more metaphysical component.

Ward's nod to this violent part of United States history, together with the motifs of liberation evident in the broken chains and forward-stepping footprints, call to mind the optimistic words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." This optimism is often evident in Ward's work where, idealistically, there is hope that each generation will strive to create a world better than the one they inherited. Inversely, the association of "correctional" with the penal system and time (a common phrase in America for going to jail is "doing time") can also be inferred from the chains and handcuffs he incorporates, opening the piece up to interpretations both optimistic and pessimistic—a dichotomy often evident in Ward's work. The notion of time is again picked up in works like *Knot Endings* (2010), which evokes the infinity symbol created from shoelaces installed directly into the wall. In this instance, not only does he allude to the corrective potential of time, but also to mass action, with the shoelaces suggesting an anonymous mobility of people.

Two more works in the exhibition, *Mending Board 12*, and *Mending Board 21* (both 2016-2017), summarize the restorative potential of *CORRECTIONAL*. Both pieces feature fractured schoolroom blackboards, mended in the traditional Japanese method of *kintsugi*, or filling a crack with gold to highlight the fracture, thus celebrating the renewal of fixing a broken object. Ward's *Mending Boards* call into question the sources and methods of education and authorship that can correct or distort knowledge, depending on how apparent the biases or fictions within history are presented and how willing society is to embrace its strengths and its flaws. Indeed, the likeliest way for history to repeat itself is to forget, therefore even with repair, we must accept our flaws in order to truly understand the present. In this focused selection of work, Ward makes the case for enshrining the best and worst examples of human nature in order to come to a more accurate understanding of humanity and where we are headed.

Ward's work was recently featured in a mid-career retrospective, *Nari Ward: Sun Splashed*, which opened at the Pérez Art Museum Miami in 2016, and traveled to the Barnes Foundation and the ICA/Boston. In 2019, the New Museum, New York will also open an important solo exhibition for the artist.

### **About the artist**

Nari Ward (b. 1963, St. Andrew, Jamaica; lives and works in New York) received a BA from City University of New York, Hunter College in 1989, and an MFA from City University of New York, Brooklyn College in 1992. Solo exhibitions of his work have been organized at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2017); Socrates Sculpture Park, New York (2017); The Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia (2016); Pérez Art Museum

Miami (2015); Savannah College of Art and Design Museum of Art, Savannah, GA (2015); Louisiana State University Museum of Art, Baton Rouge, LA (2014); The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia (2011); Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, North Adams, MA (2011); Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston (2002); and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN (2001, 2000). Select group exhibitions featuring his work include *Objects Like Us*, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT (forthcoming, 2018-2019); *UPTOWN: nastywomen/badhombres*, El Museo del Barrio, New York (2017); *Black: Color, Material, Concept*, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2015); *The Great Mother*, the Fondazione Nicola Trussardi, Palazzo Reale, Milan (2015); *The Freedom Principle: Experiments in Art and Music, 1965 to Now*, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (2015); *NYC 1993: Experimental Jet Set, Trash and No Star*, New Museum, New York (2013); *Contemplating the Void: Interventions in the Guggenheim Rotunda*, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2010); the Whitney Biennial, New York (2006); and *Landings*, Documenta XI, Kassel, Germany (2003). Ward's work is in numerous international public and private collections, including Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Baltimore Museum of Art, MD; the Brooklyn Museum, New York; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; GAM, Galleria Civica di arte, Torino, Italy; The Institute of Contemporary Art Boston; Istanbul Modern, Istanbul, Turkey; Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, NC; The New York Public Library, New York; Pérez Art Museum Miami; Speed Art Museum, Louisville, KY; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Ward has received numerous honors and distinctions, including the Vilcek Prize in Fine Arts, Vilcek Foundation, New York (2017); the Joyce Award, The Joyce Foundation, Chicago (2015), the Rome Prize, American Academy of Rome (2012), and awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (1998), the Pollock-Krasner Foundation (1996); and the National Endowment for the Arts (1994). Ward has also received commissions from the United Nations and the World Health Organization.

### **Lehmann Maupin Seoul**

Lehmann Maupin opened its Seoul location in December 2017 in the Sogyeokdong neighborhood between the Gyeongbok Palace and Bukchon Hanok Village. This culturally dynamic district melds the contemporary with the historic and is home to the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art (MMCA) and Artsonje Center, as well as other major galleries. The location originally served as a viewing office for appointment-only presentations, and the launch of a full public exhibitions program in Seoul was a much-anticipated and natural development, given Lehmann Maupin's connection to the city through its representation of artists like Lee Bul, Do Ho Suh, and Kim Guiline. Seoul is the gallery's second location in Asia, with Lehmann Maupin Hong Kong opened in 2013.

### **About Lehmann Maupin**

Rachel Lehmann and David Maupin founded Lehmann Maupin in 1996. The gallery represents a diverse range of American artists, as well as artists and estates from across Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and the Middle East. It has been instrumental in introducing numerous artists from around the world in their first New York exhibitions. Known for championing artists who create groundbreaking and challenging forms of

visual expression, the gallery prioritizes personal investigations and individual narratives. Lehmann Maupin prizes the distinct conceptual approaches that its artists offer on the essential matters that shape international culture today, including gender, class, religion, history, politics, and globalism. In 2013, with two locations in New York, significant interest in its artists abroad, and growing opportunities in new markets, Lehmann Maupin opened an additional location in Hong Kong, followed by Seoul in 2017. For more information on the gallery and its artists, visit [www.lehmannmaupin.com](http://www.lehmannmaupin.com).

**Current & Upcoming Exhibitions**

Nicholas Hlobo, *Ulwamkelo*, Through August 25, 2018, West 22nd Street, NEW YORK

*Gridology*, Through October 24, 2018, Pedder Building, HONG KONG

Marilyn Minter, August 30—October 27, 2018, Pedder Building, HONG KONG

Liza Lou, *Classification and Nomenclature of Clouds*, September 6—October 27, 2018, West 24th Street, NEW YORK

For more information on Nari Ward, or other Lehmann Maupin artists, please contact Kathryn McKinney at +1 212 255 2923 or [kathryn@lehmannmaupin.com](mailto:kathryn@lehmannmaupin.com).

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