

LISSON GALLERY

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## Press Release

Hugh Hayden

*Border States*

September 15 – October 27, 2018

138 Tenth Avenue, New York

Opening: September 15, 6 – 8pm

Lisson Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of new works by Texas-born, New York-based artist Hugh Hayden. This marks the artist's first exhibition with the gallery and will feature sculpture created from wood indigenous to the United States and Mexico border.

Hugh Hayden's work investigates natural and artificial means of identification. From early works featuring hair, feathers, tree bark and clothing to recent sculptures created from salvaged Christmas trees, Hayden begins with objects which inherently carry significant associations with societal categorization: race, religion, ethnicity, education, sexuality and the like. Using a rigorous process of sawing, sanding and sculpting, he combines disparate types of wood to create new composite forms which address themes of assimilation and acceptance, and metaphorically disrupt traditional American social context.

In the exhibition at Lisson Gallery, Hayden explores notions of citizenship, manifest destiny and the contested boundaries between people and nations. He has collected different varieties of wood from his home state of Texas; including Eastern Red Cedar, a wood with a pinkish interior also called 'Aromatic Cedar' for its fragrance; Ashe or 'Blueberry' cedar, found in the area's Hill Country; 'Texas Ebony', identified by its dark color and found in the region that lies at the Texas and Mexico border; and Mesquite, which is known for its weed-like ability to spread quickly and the invasive nature in which it requires a great deal of water from an already arid climate. This lumber, gathered in highly politicized areas, has been combined to create forms that typify the idealistic US notions of family values and home ownership — a shared dinner table, the white picket fence, a baby crib and stroller. These personal components embodied the greater idea that dreams are attainable by all people through hard work and determination and that upward mobility can be visible through a series of material objects.

However, the exhibition arises at a time when America's characteristic optimism is at a low ebb and when the widely-held ideals of the country as a land of opportunity, hope and familial togetherness, are similarly in crisis. In the current geopolitical climate, the works begin to take on a new, twisted relevance. The fence which is traditionally a status of having achieved a middle-class suburban life, is now a wall, erected to exclude. The table, the crib and stroller which once embodied the community and safe routines of an everyday life now sit empty — relics of the American dream.

## **About Hugh Hayden**

Hugh Hayden's artwork is interested in the anthropomorphization of the natural world as a visceral lens of exploring the human condition. Hayden transforms familiar materials to challenge our perceptions of ourselves, others and the environment. Raised in Texas and trained as an architect, his work arises from a deep connection to nature and its organic materials. Hayden utilizes wood as his primary medium, frequently loaded with multi-layered histories in their origin, including objects as varied as discarded trunks, rare indigenous timber, Christmas trees or souvenir African sculptures. From these he saws, sculpts and sands the wood, often combining disparate types, creating new composite forms that also reflect their complex cultural backgrounds. As a metaphor for human relation to its existence and past experience, Hayden's work questions the stasis of social dynamics and asks the viewer to examine their place within an ever-shifting ecosystem.

Hugh Hayden was born in Dallas, Texas in 1983 and lives and works in New York City. He holds an MFA from Columbia University and a Bachelor of Architecture from Cornell University. His work was the subject of a solo exhibition at White Columns in New York in 2018. His work has been included in numerous group exhibitions including JTT, New York (2018); Clearing, New York (2018); Tanya Bonakdar Gallery (2018); PPOW Gallery, New York (2017); Gavin Brown's enterprise, New York (2017); Postmasters Gallery, New York (2016); MoMA PS1, Rockaway Beach, New York (2014); Socrates Sculpture Park, New York (2014); and Abrons Art Center, New York (2013), among others. He is the recipient of residences at Glenfiddich in Dufftown, Scotland (2014); Abrons Art Center and Socrates Sculpture Park (both 2012), and Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (2011).

### **For press enquiries, please contact**

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