

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

Positioner: Lena Henke, Ravi Jackson, Julien Nguyen, Julia Phillips, Paul Mpagi Sepuya

October 13 – December 22, 2018

Opening: Saturday, October 13, 3:00 to 5:00 PM

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **Positioner**, the next exhibition in his gallery at 1062 North Orange Grove and 7818 Santa Monica Boulevard. The exhibition features the work of five artists: **Lena Henke, Ravi Jackson, Julien Nguyen, Julia Phillips, and Paul Mpagi Sepuya.**

Positioner focuses on the ways in which artists today are approaching one of the oldest traditions in visual art: the depiction of an individual. Representation, figuration, and portraiture all carry with them implications of power, visibility, and identity. The artists in this exhibition, working in a broad range of media, expand upon and push against these histories, suggesting more inclusive and critically-engaged ways forward. The title of the exhibition is borrowed from Julia Phillips, whose work often alludes to the unseen nature of institutionalized discrimination.

The notion of visibility is central to **Paul Mpagi Sepuya's** work, in which bodies are revealed, mirrored, and reimagined. In these works, the artist's studio becomes a site for introspection, collaboration, and experimentation. The human body is referenced but decidedly absent in the ceramic sculptures of **Julia Phillips.** Her haunting tableaux speak to, in the words of writer Nana Adusei-Poku, "the simultaneous fragility and power of the ideologies that dominate our lives, interactions, and emotional landscapes."

Julien Nguyen looks to an unlikely source of inspiration in his newest work: the oft-maligned painter of a certain rugged vision of America, Andrew Wyeth. For Nguyen, Vietnamese-American and gay, to access Wyeth's notably straight and white domain is both a pointed and poignant act. In *Die Kommenden* (2018) **Lena Henke** retools iconic modernist sculptures in the likeness of her family members — notably, Henke has appropriated a Matisse nude for her own stand-in. A rough-hewn structure in the German half-timber *fachwerkhaus* style houses the sculptures, drawing attention to the mutability of national identity. **Ravi Jackson's** work combines brightly hued painterly gestures, occasionally brash pop-culture imagery, and a sense of construction in line with assemblage. In his works included here, Jackson addresses white toxic masculinity with an almost manic glee.

Positioner is on view at 1062 North Orange Grove and 7818 Santa Monica Boulevard from October 13 to December 22, 2018, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

For additional information, please contact Beau Rutland at 212-243-0200 or beau@matthewmarks.com.