

McArthur Binion

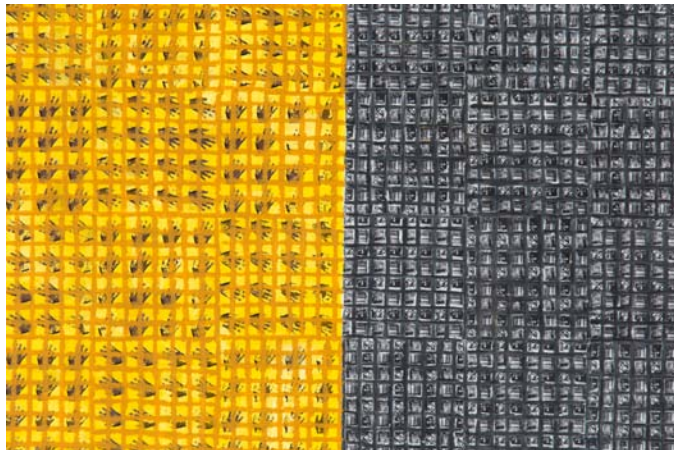
Hand:Work

January 17 – March 2, 2019

501 West 24th Street, New York

@lehmannmaupin | #mcarthurbinion

Opening Reception: Thursday, January 17, 6-8 PM



hand: work (detail), 2018, oil paint stick, ink, and paper on board, 48 x 40 x 2 inches, 121.9 x 101.6 x 5.1 cm. Courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Hong Kong, and Seoul.

New York, December 3, 2018 — Lehmann Maupin is pleased to announce its inaugural exhibition for McArthur Binion. *Hand:Work* marks an important point in the artist’s career, as both an evolution of and departure from his most well-known body of work, the *DNA Series*. Since the 1970s, Binion has honed a distinct style of painting using oil stick and wax crayon. His grid paintings at first glance appear composed in typical minimalist style, but upon further inspection reveal densely layered, multimedia works with extensive reference to the artist’s personal history. While many of these past paintings have focused on the accumulation of social and bureaucratic documents and

identification that amass over a lifetime, Binion’s most recent works are remarkably self-reflective paintings and give a more intimate glimpse into the artist’s labor-intensive practice. There will be a reception for the artist on January 17, from 6 to 8 PM at 501 West 24th Street.

Over the course of his career, Binion has defied classification as an artist. His highly distinctive, innovative, and self-referential practice, as well as his early life in rural Mississippi, would confuse some to classify him an outsider, however he attended the prestigious Cranbrook Academy of Art and was the first African-American student to graduate from the school’s MFA painting program in 1973. After graduation, Binion moved to New York City and found himself in a hotbed of artistic activity—socializing and working among Jean-Michel Basquiat, Brice Marden, and Sol LeWitt. But after two decades in the city, Binion chose another route, moving to Chicago to teach. Throughout the 1980s and ‘90s, his style evolved from more gestural abstraction to increasingly pared-down, colorful, geometric abstraction. Binion’s earliest incorporation of found material came during the 1980s, when, using stickers from fruit wrappers that depicted racial stereotypes, he realized the potential for building up an “under-conscious” of a painting. During the mid-‘90s, Binion incorporated his first personal mementos into his work, and in the early 2000s, he hit upon his unique amalgamation of these aesthetic elements, incorporating pages from his personal phone book, his birth certificate, and family photos beneath dense grids. These works made their international debut in 2017 at the Venice Biennale.

For Binion, his personal documents represent the sum total of one’s social life: relationships, citizenship, vocation, and family life. The revealing and obscuring of these aspects of his life also addresses the larger sociopolitical reality of African-American identity—often obscured or erased from common knowledge, yet always present in tandem with major movements in American culture. In his newest *Hand:Work* paintings, Binion takes an introspective approach that is more closely aligned with the artist’s own self-perception—

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effectively, his first self-portraits. Using copies of a photo of the home where he was born, along with a photograph of his hand as the ground layer of the paintings, Binion pares down his identity to its most essential elements. These images are tiled in repeated succession, layered under his repetitious line work in oil stick. These gestures themselves relate to memories Binion has of his early childhood farm life, a disciplined approach to the cyclical, sustained effort he maintains in his work today. Through the insertion of his hand, literally in the photographs, and figuratively in his intricate, overlapping mark-making, the artist relates to his earliest introduction to artistry in his mother's quilting, a tradition he modified and carried into his practice.

Through the incorporation of his hand as a self-generating subject, Binion pushes his work into new conceptual territory, expanding his repertoire to that of an artist engaged in performative self-portraiture. Taking full control of his identity as an artist, Binion emerges as a powerful voice exploring the nuanced ramifications of personal and social identity in the 21st century.

Concurrent with this exhibition at Lehmann Maupin, the Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI, will be showing *Binion/Saarinen: A McArthur Binion Project* through March 10, 2019.

About the artist

McArthur Binion (b. 1946, Macon, MS; lives and works in Chicago) received his BFA from Wayne State University, Detroit, in 1971, and his MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI, in 1973. Binion's works were featured prominently in the 57th Venice Biennale, VIVA ARTE VIVA, curated by Christine Macel. Solo exhibitions of his work have been organized at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, (2012); and the University of Maryland University College Gallery, Adelphi, MD (2010). Recent group exhibitions featuring his work include *Picturing Mississippi, 1817-2017: Land of Plenty, Pain, and Promise*, Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson, MS (2017); *Dimensions of Black: a Collaboration* with the San Diego African American Museum of Fine Art, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego (2017); *New at NOMA: Recent Acquisitions in Modern and Contemporary Art*, New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans (2017); *Through the African American Lens*, National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, D.C. (2017); *Circa 1970*, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2016); *Prospect.3: Notes for Now*, New Orleans (2014); *When the Stars Begin to Fall: Imagination in the American South*, The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York (2014); and *Black in the Abstract*, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (2013). His work is in numerous public and private collections, including the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI; Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit; Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, D.C.; New Orleans Museum of Art; The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.; Wayne State University, Detroit; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

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

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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.

Current & Upcoming Exhibitions

Mandy El Sayegh, *MUTATIONS IN BLUE, WHITE AND RED*, Through December 22, 2018, West 22nd Street, NEW YORK

Kader Attia, *Héroes Heridos*, Through December 22, 2018, HONG KONG

Angel Otero, *Piel de Luna*, Through December 22, 2018, SEOUL

Catherine Opie, *The Modernist*, Through January 12, 2019, West 24th Street, NEW YORK

Gilbert & George, *THE BEARD PICTURES*, January 10—March 16, 2019, HONG KONG & SEOUL

For more information on McArthur Binion, or other Lehmann Maupin artists, please contact Kathryn McKinney at +1 212 255 2923 or kathryn@lehmannmaupin.com.

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