

RICHARD GRAY GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Theaster Gates

Every Square Needs a Circle

April 4 - June 29, 2019

Opening reception:

Thursday, April 4, 2019 from 6-8 PM

2044 West Carroll Avenue, Chicago

CHICAGO - Richard Gray Gallery is pleased to announce *Every Square Needs a Circle*, a solo exhibition presenting new sculpture, tar paintings, installation, and neon work by Theaster Gates. The exhibition opens at Gray Warehouse with a reception for the artist on Thursday, April 4th, 2019, from 6-8 PM.



Every Square Needs a Circle marks a continuation of Gates's long engagement with the work of American sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois, whose examination of genius and progress in Black America from Emancipation to the mid-20th century has been a source of inspiration for the artist. Placing his interest in poetics and the history of objects, Gates debuts a multi-faceted installation that bridges the work of Du Bois with architectural excerpts from Chicago, expounding on the archives that hold and preserve records of Black intelligence.

Relating moments from art history to stories of quotidian labor, *Every Square Needs a Circle* is a rumination on materials, time and repetition. Gates elects a 1962 artwork by Agnes Martin titled *Little Sister* as a foundational moment for the exhibition. The small oil and ink painting on canvas—punctuated by hundreds of brass nails hammered onto a gridded composition—serves as the Modernist antecedent to Gates's assertion that everyday processes are a means to soulful fulfillment.

The grid becomes a metaphor for the city's built environment, onto which Gates imposes the physical history of his native Chicago. Extending architectural elements and archival materials through works in tar and neon, Gates puts forth a critique of the city that comments on Black economies and empire building. Gates explains, "the work is not about a social mission - it is about sculpture and how things I believe in manifest through the material world."

ABOUT THEASTER GATES

Theaster Gates (b.1973) was born and raised in Chicago, where he currently lives and works. Drawing from his earlier vocational pursuits in public service, urban planning and religious studies, Gates works to redeem spaces that have been left behind, centering his practice on the possibility of the “life within things.” Known for his recirculation of art-world capital, Gates’s recent artworks possess an intersectional relationship between space theory and land development, sculpture and performance, smartly upturning art values, land values and human values. In all aspects of his work, he contends with the notion of Black space as a formal exercise – one defined by collective desire, artistic agency and the tactics of a pragmatist.

With a celebrated stronghold in Chicago, Gates’s career has seen international recognition from his participation in the Whitney Biennial (2010), Documenta 13 (2012), and Venice Biennale (2015), to major museum exhibitions all over the world. Recent solo exhibitions include *The Listening Room*, Seattle Art Museum (2011–12); *13th Ballad*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2013); *Soul Manufacturing Corporation: To Make the Thing that Makes the Things*, Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia (2013); *Processions*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC (2016); *True Value*, Fondazione Prada, Milan (2016); *Black Archive*, Kunsthau Bregenz, Austria (2016); *How to Build a House Museum*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto (2016); *The Minor Arts*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC (2017); *Black Madonna*, Kunstmuseum Basel (2018) and Sprengel Museum, Hannover, Germany (2018); *The Black Image Corporation*, Fondazione Prada, Milan (2018); and *Amalgam*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2019). Many of Gates’s recent exhibitions, including *Black Madonna* and *The Black Image Corporation*, are a part of his ongoing engagement with the archives of Johnson Publishing Company.

Gates’s current academic affiliations include the University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois; the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California; and Colby College, Waterville, Maine. Gates has received numerous awards and distinctions, including the Nasher Prize (2018), the Kurt Schwitters Prize (2017), the American Academy of Arts & Sciences Award (2016), the Smithsonian American Ingenuity Award for Social Progress (2015), and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden trusteeship (2015). Public collections include Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

UPCOMING FROM RICHARD GRAY GALLERY

Art Basel Hong Kong, March 29-31, 2019

Ewan Gibbs: New York / Chicago, Richard Gray Gallery, New York, April 25-June 29, 2019

Frieze New York, May 2-5, 2019

Art Basel in Basel, June 13-16, 2019

For press inquiries, please contact Becky Daniel, 312/642.8877, bd@richardgraygallery.com

Gray Warehouse is open 11AM - 5 PM, Wednesday – Saturday

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