



BO JOSEPH:
Souvenirs from Nowhere

September 12 - October 24, 2015

Artist Reception: Saturday, September 12, 12 – 2pm
Artist Talk at 2pm

McClain Gallery is pleased to present our premier exhibition for fall 2015, *Bo Joseph: Souvenirs from Nowhere*. This is the New York-based artist's second solo exhibition at McClain Gallery and will highlight his new works on paper. The work ranges from medium to large-scale drawings, including a new series of oil pastel, acrylic and tempera works with punctured, stencil-like cut-outs. Joseph draws from a myriad of cultural references and shared histories, reimagining and decontextualizing the familiar into abstract forms within spatially complex compositions. The artist will be attending the opening reception and will give an

artist's talk immediately following the opening at 2 pm.

Joseph's work is distinguished by a complex and labor-intensive process that he has developed over the years; beginning with a selection of images culled from his vast archive of catalogs, personal photographs and books collected from his travels. The selected souvenirs are then visually stripped of normal reference points and distilled into solid shapes. Outlines of these shapes are drawn multiple times in vivid oil pastels onto various layers of paper. To create a larger support, the smaller sections of paper are joined to form a kind of patchwork reminiscent of textiles or panoramic maps. The "puzzle" is then disassembled and covered with a dense layer of tempera paint. Each sheet is then razor-scraped, sanded and finally coated with acrylic-based ink before being rinsed, dried and reassembled. Joseph's method of utilizing both constructive and destructive techniques masterfully mimics the course of humanity's collective history.

Recurring imagery includes Tribal masks, totems and jewelry from Ancient cultures as well as birds, figures and architectural elements. When these images become basic shapes they also become only fragments of meaning. "I scavenge images of objects that transcend cultural boundaries without losing their intrinsic charge" says Joseph. He views the joined paper support on which he paints these layered images as a dynamic "found object, more than just a surface." The by-products of Joseph's anthropological explorations, now stripped of context, are reconciled on an energetic surface to become vestiges of their original forms.

Born in California in 1969, Joseph lives and works in New York City. He received his BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1992 and has received awards and honors such as the Basil H. Alkazzi Award, and fellowships in painting from Provincetown Fine Arts Work Center and the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts. He has been a visiting artist/lecturer at the University of Massachusetts in Dartmouth, MA and the Rhode Island School of Design where he also taught drawing. His work can be found in museums nationally and abroad including Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Kemper Museum of

Contemporary Art, Kansas City, MO; and Guilin Art Museum, China.

A fully illustrated catalogue of this exhibition, with an essay by Matthew Weinstein will be available. Please inquire for more information.

Image: Bo Joseph, *Pangaea: Terra Nullius*, 2014, oil pastel, acrylic and tempera on joined paper, 55 5/8 x 80 1/4 inches

McClain Gallery

2242 Richmond Avenue

Houston, Texas 77098

T: 713.520.9988 www.mcclaingallery.com

info@mcclaingallery.com