

Marlborough

PRESS RELEASE

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PETER SACKS NEW WORKS

APRIL 5 - MAY 6, 2017

NEW YORK, NEW YORK: The Directors of Marlborough Gallery are pleased to announce the first solo exhibition at the gallery of works by South African-born, U.S.-based painter Peter Sacks. The exhibition will include over 14 recent paintings as well as collage works on paper. The artist's approach to painting includes utilizing the most intimate material residues of life — textiles, texts, and traces of objects—all transformed into active fields of energy, empathy and history. Each work by Sacks is a striking accretion of material, meaning, and emotion. In addition to wood, metal, cardboard, batting and quilting, the rhythmic surfaces are made up of pieces of fabric from Africa, India, Europe, embroidery, fishing nets, buttons and burlap. Garments and fragments such as shrouds, nightshirts and denim work clothes feature prominently in several works and evince the human situation in universal yet intimate ways. By incorporating these artifacts, the artist's paintings become textured, shapeshifting worlds which register everything from ritual belief to delight or danger, loss or retrieval. Sacks has referred to his intensive process of discovery and layering as “excavating in reverse.”



Township 5, 2014-2016
mixed media, 84 x 84 in., 213.4 x 213.4 cm

Art critic and author Sebastian Smee, who contributed the essay for the exhibition's catalogue, writes of the new works that they “are as ambitious, full-throated, and convincing as any I have seen by a living artist over the past decade.” He states further, “their beauty is polyphonic...in their visual brilliance, their material variety, and their hard-won coherence, they confirm that—amid the convulsions of history, the unfolding fiasco—the parade of life goes on.”

In addition to line, color and intricately wrought patterns, the written word—text typed by the artist on a manual typewriter directly onto fabric—is a partially buried yet powerful element of the work. Within these charged fields viewers will unearth transcriptions from Dante to Virginia Woolf to Nelson Mandela, as well as testimonies from current political prisoners and refugees. All that seemed vestigial is revitalized, and collective memories are ever present. The recent paintings by Peter Sacks conjure and celebrate humanity's ebb and flow, as well as the marks we make upon the spaces we inhabit, construct, adulterate or rescue.

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Peter Sacks was born in 1950 in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. He lived there for the first part of his life, mostly in the city of Durban on the Indian Ocean. Sacks studied at Oxford, as well as, in the United States, at Princeton and Yale. His work included the study of art and the history of painting, and was influenced by the rock-art of Southern Africa, the frescoes of the early Renaissance, the funerary portraiture of Egypt and the entangled figurative and abstract heritages of Modernism. Sacks spent years travelling, most oftentimes on foot, across various parts of South and North America, Africa, Europe and Asia. The artist currently divides his time between Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Works by Peter Sacks can be found in numerous collections including The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; The Collection of the Constitutional Court of South Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa; The Ethelbert Cooper Museum of African and African American Art, Cambridge, MA; Rose Museum of Art, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA; and The Beyond Borders Foundation, Edinburgh, Scotland.

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