

Marlon Mullen

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MASSIMODECARLO MASSIMODECARLO is pleased to announce the first exhibition of the American artist Marlon Mullen with the gallery, opening on July 15, 2021 at our gallery in Hong Kong.

Mullen was born in 1963 in Richmond, California. Suffering from an autistic spectrum disorder and expressive aphasia, in 1986 the artist became a resident of the NIAD art centre (the Nurturing Independence Through Artistic Development) in his home town.

Rarely using spoken or written language in his daily life, Marlon has found a way to interact with the outer world by the medium of painting words. His 'artistic voice' started to take shape when a few years back NIAD was gifted with boxes of art magazines, such as *Art in America*, *Artnews* and catalogues of auction houses sales which soon became the artist's main source of inspiration.

By painting the front pages of these magazines with rich and energetic brushstrokes, Mullen revealed a strong aim to communicate his real inner nature, a personal story made of vibrant colours. Mostly laying his canvases flat on a table, Marlon works by looking down to them, reproducing the texts from his sources using a singular technique, in which he mixes liquid hand soap with acrylic paints.

The artist's vulnerability to communicate through an oral discourse is therefore converted into a creative process that interprets words solely for their formal value. It is no surprise then if the letters on his canvases disappear or simply vanish under layers of paint, while the image retains the majority of colours. The same happens for the shapes which Mullen often gets engaged with, such as blocks, straps, and twigs. Moreover, the artist is fascinated by barcodes and when he portrays covers with mailing labels, the parallel black marks often become the dominant colours.

His first solo show in Hong Kong presents an exceptional selection of works created across the years, from 2014 up to 2019.

Marlon Mullen's most recent work *Untitled*, 2019

was exhibited at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art on the occasion of the 2019 *SECA Art Award exhibition*.

Marlon Muller's works have been included in important group exhibitions such as the 2019 *SECA Art Award exhibition*, SFMOMA, San Francisco, CA (2019); *Whitney Biennial*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY (2019); *Way Bay 2*, U.C. Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive (BAMPFA), Berkeley, CA (2018); *Affinity*, Museum of Northern California Art, Chico, CA (2017); *Under Another Name*, Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY (2014–15); and *Create*, BAMPFA (2011).

Mullen received the 2014 *Wynn Newhouse Award*.

His work is in the collections of San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA; ICA Miami, Miami, FL; Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR; RISD Museum, Providence, RI; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY.

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