



# RESISTANCE

GROUP EXHIBITION

May 1 - 30, 2021

**MARUANI MERCIER**

A refined selection of paintings and sculptures celebrating  
the power of an inspiring and highly symbolic colour:

**BLACK**

The perception of colours and its use has always been cultural and ideological. A colour is often associated to an economic, political, social, symbolic issue within a specific context. “Any history of colours must first be a social history.” In this sense, the colour is a fact of society and as for each colour, the nature of black is twofold as it has been developed by the historian Michel Pastoureau in his book *Noir: Histoire d’une couleur*.\* The black colour sometimes cumulates at the same time pejorative charge and elective value. Over the centuries, its symbolism has been subject to debate.

Often associated with witchcraft or mourning, from the 14th to the 16th century, black became a respectable and luxurious colour, related to royalty until the middle of the 17th century. Later, the black colour has been linked to modernity. As such the meaning of the black colour has evolved over the years and its significance is now pluri-vocal. It has become tragic, poetic, modern, elegant, and transgressive, often seen as a symbol of rebellion.

In the history of art, the colour black evolved and became the subject matter and experimentation of many artists. As Henri Matisse said “Black is a colour by itself, which sums up and consumes the other colours.” In 1915, the Russian painter Kasimir Malevich presented his famous *Black Cross* and *Black Square*, initiating the movement of suprematism, which focused on basic geometric forms painted in a limited range of colours. The black in Malevich’s paintings, discharged of its symbolic substance, becomes a manifesto of modernity, marking a break in the history of art. Later, Abstract Expressionist artists such as Robert Motherwell and Franz Kline appropriated the black colour as their artistic language, exploring the materiality of the colour. The American sculptor Louise Nevelson, on her side, honoured the black colour through monumental, monochromatic, wooden wall pieces and outdoor sculptures made out of recycled objects. The black colour for her “wasn’t a negation of colour. It was an acceptance. Because black encompasses all colours. Black is the most aristocratic of all.”

\* Michel Pastoureau, *Noir: Histoire d’une couleur*, Le Seuil, 2008.

In the sixties, the French painter Pierre Soulages created the concept of *outrenoir*, exclusively using the black colour to create black paintings that evolve in time and space through light. In opposition to the variety of nuances of black used by Soulages, the British artist Anish Kapoor bought the artistic rights of the *Vantablack* colour in 2016, a colour which defies the perception of space and materiality.

In the continuation of this historical introduction of the black colour, the exhibition *Resistance* celebrates the place of black in contemporary art, from drawings, to paintings, through photography and sculptures. The exhibition combines in an elegant way, creations that analyse the emotional, poetical, social and political impact of black pieces. Some inspire melancholy, some show us the expressionist power of this chromatic choice, others analyse the colour in a more conceptual/ironical way.

The show puts together works by: Radcliffe Bailey, Kwesi Botchway, Justin Brice, Stefan Brüggemann, Keith Haring, Lyle Ashton Harris, Bill Jensen, Rashid Johnson, Paul Kremer, Allan McCollum, Paul Morrison, Hermann Nitsch, Nathalie Provosty, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Hank Willis Thomas and Gavin Turk.

Crucial contemporary Afro-American artists like Rashid Johnson, Radcliffe Bailey, Lyle Ashton Harris and Hank Willis Thomas in MARUANI MERCIER's group exhibition gives a political dimension to the exhibition referring implicitly to the important socio-political campaign of 'Black Lives Matter'.

**Radcliffe Bailey**  
**Mobile Bay 1959, 2019**  
piano keys and wax  
123.5 x 90 x 20 cm  
48 9/16 x 35 6/16 x 7 13/16 in





**Kwesi Botchway**  
**Heaven, 2021**  
acrylic and oil on canvas  
80 x 80 cm  
31 1/2 x 31 1/2 in

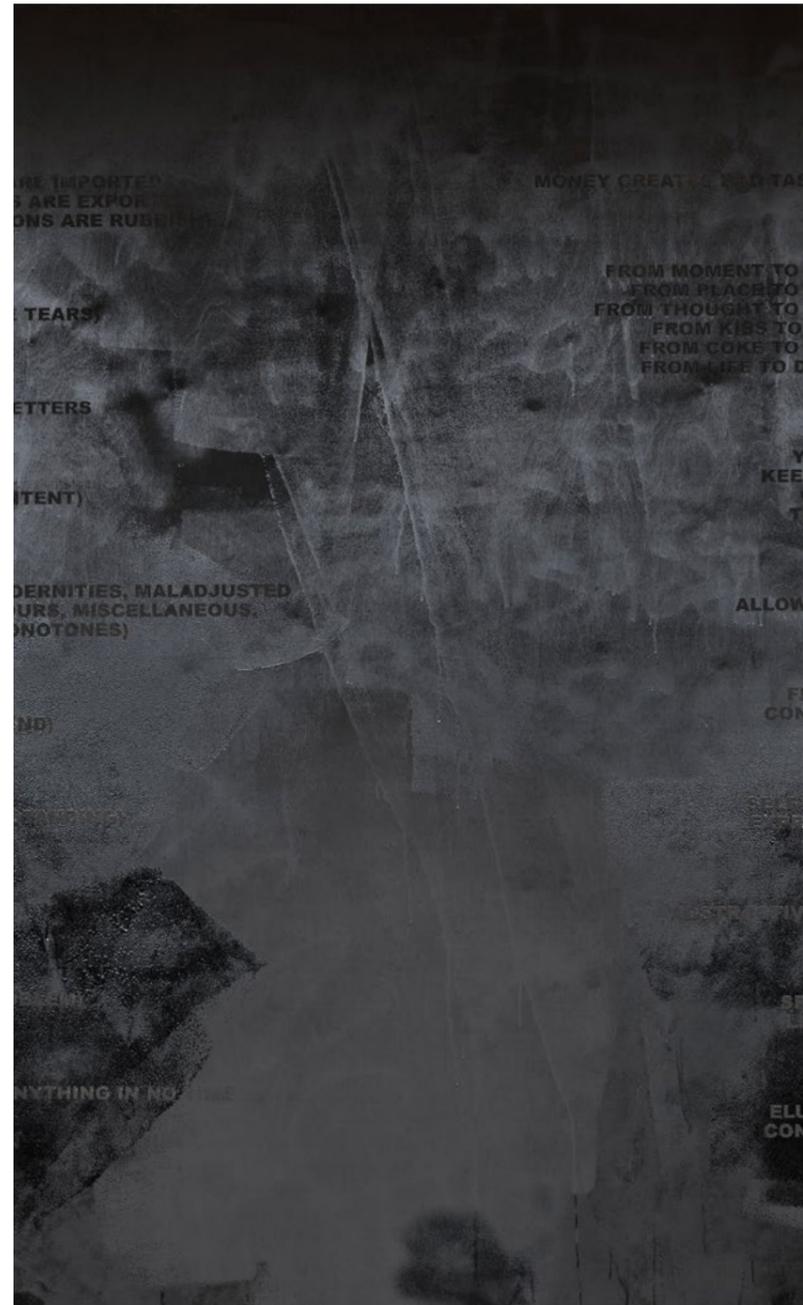
The central piece of the show *Resistance*, a sculpture by Hank Willis Thomas, draws upon the history of the Leopard (Anyoto) Society, a secret society active from 1890-1935 across west Africa. Although it was a society established for political emancipation and empowerment as a way to circumvent colonialist rule, the Leopard Society is depicted by-and-large as violent, evil, and sexually promiscuous in popular culture and the Euro-centric imagination, which can be traced through the dissemination of the Tarzan stories, Tintin comic, Disney motion pictures, and beyond. By isolating the claw of the “leopard” individually, Thomas draws attention to its symbolism of power, unity, and community.

While some of the works presented in the exhibition have a political undertone, not only referring to socio-political matters but also responding to an environmental urgency, like Justin Brice’s abstract ocean views, other works focus on the aesthetic experience obtained by “monochromatic” black pieces.

Some inspire melancholy, like Hiroshi Sugimoto’s blurred photographs of architecture resisting time and erosion. Some show us the expressionist power of this chromatic choice: Hermann Nitsch’s monumental compositions, or Bill Jensen’s impressive mountains.

Others analyse the colour in a more conceptual/ironical way like Allan McCollum or Gavin Turk.

**Stefan Bruggemann**  
**Hyper-Palimpsest, 2019**  
acrylic and spray paint on wood  
205 x 120 x 5.5 cm  
80 3/4 x 47 1/4 x 2 1/8 in  
ref : BRUGG95546



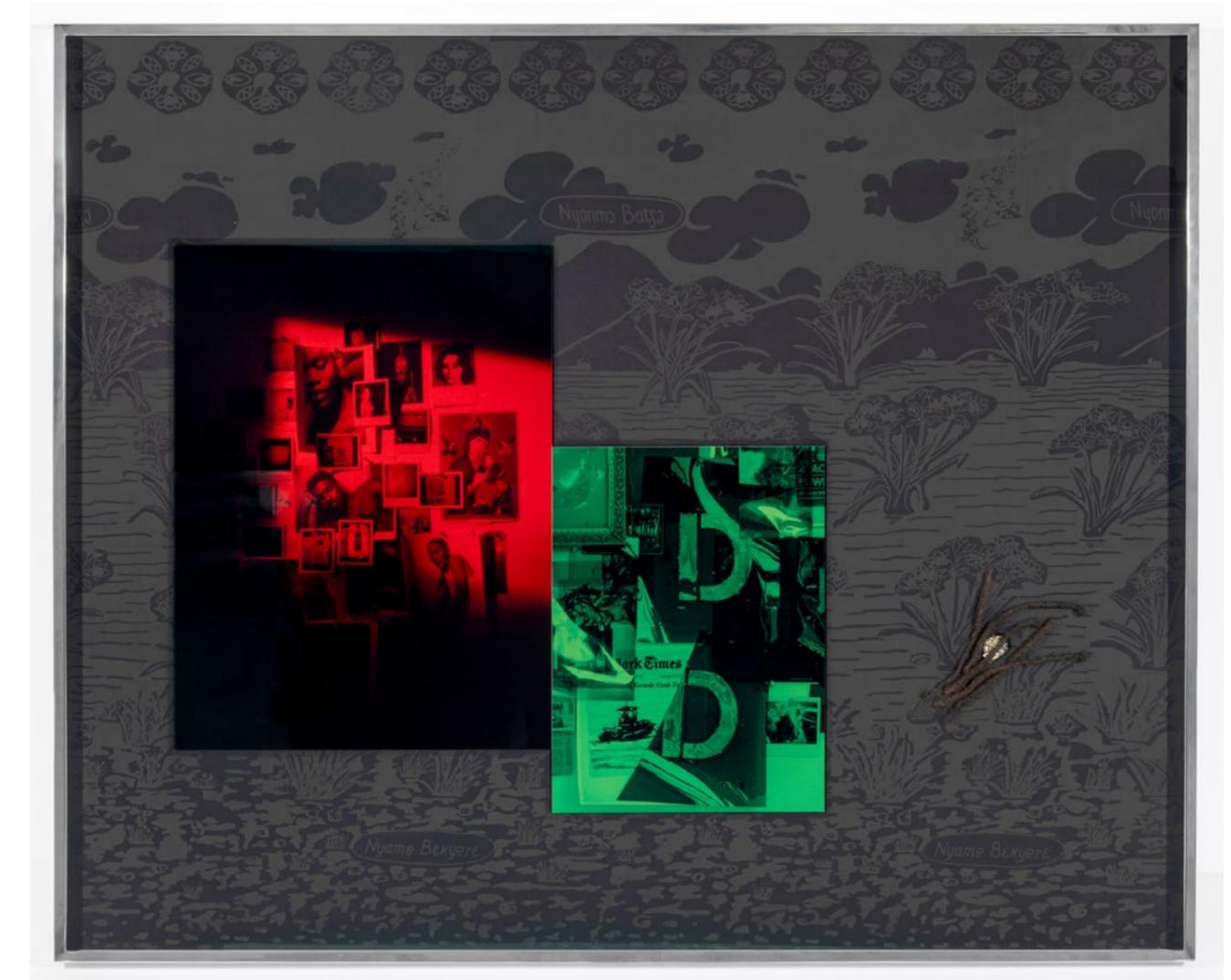
**Keith Haring**  
**Untitled, 1988**  
signed, inscribed and dated 'K. Haring AUG. 25 88 FOR DENNIS'  
sumi ink on paper  
73 x 102 cm  
28 11/16 x 40 2/16 in  
framing dimensions: 89 x 118 x 4 cm



Using the colour black in an abstract style, Nathalie Provosty and Paul Kremer both incorporate geometric forms in their paintings. While Paul Kremer's work is in a sense reminiscent of Ellsworth Kelly's minimalist and Colour Field paintings, Nathalie Provosty's monochromatic black paintings evolve with the appearance of light.

The exhibition is completed by the more playful works by Keith Haring and Paul Morrison. In a cartoon style, Keith Haring addresses social issues, advocating for AIDS awareness. Paul Morrison, on his side is known for methodical black and white landscape paintings and print.

Resistance explores the different possible interpretations and aesthetics of the black colour, inviting the viewer to reflect on the political, social and poetical meaning of the colour.



**Lyle Ashton Harris**

**Nyame Bekyere, 2019**

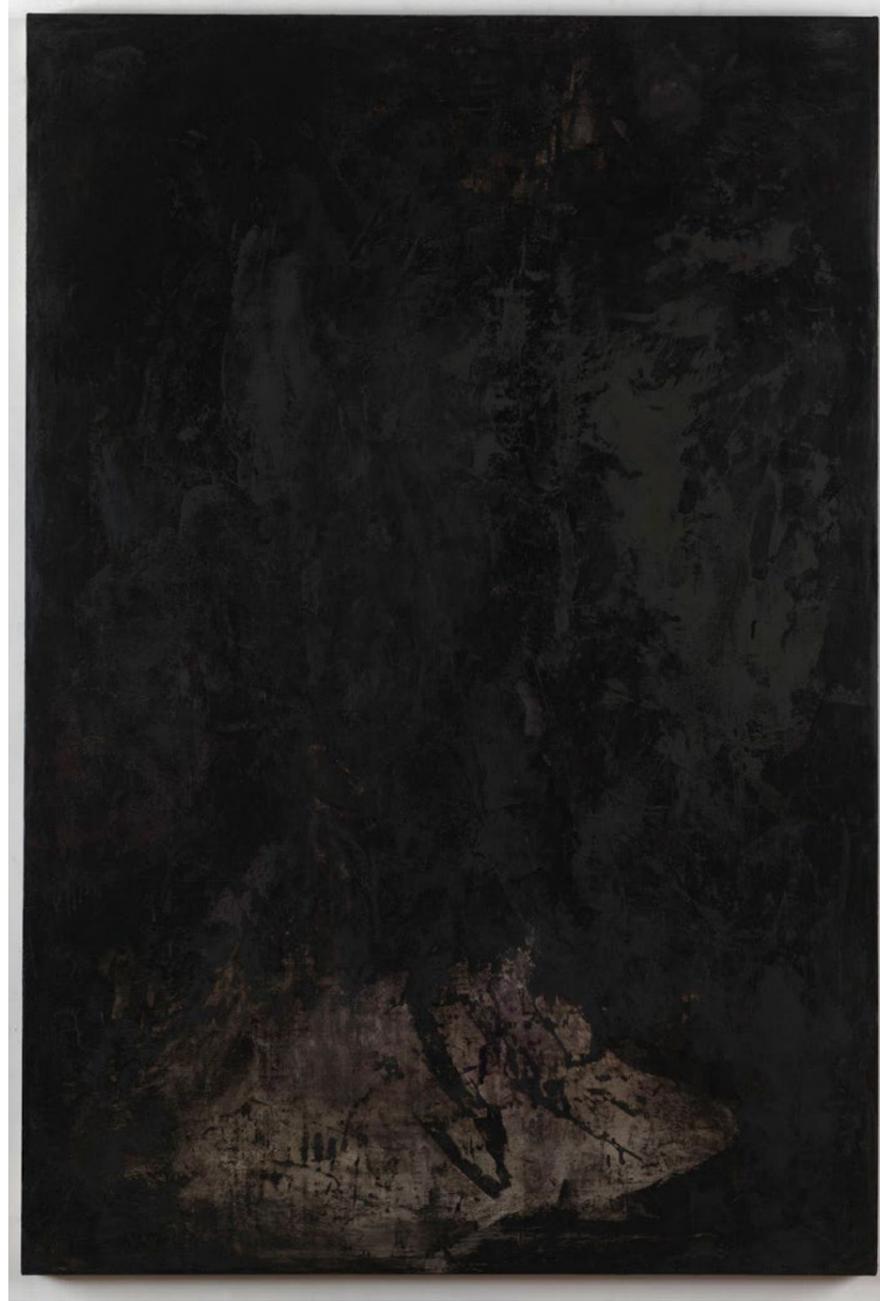
unique assemblage (Ghanaian cloth two-dye sublimation prints artist's ephemera)

103.1748 x 126.365 cm

40 9/16 x 49 3/4 in

framing dimensions: 103.17 x 126.36 x 6.35 cm

**Bill Jensen**  
**END OF THE ORDINARY REALM (HUANGSHAN MOUNTAIN), 2013-14**  
oil on linen  
155 x 104 cm  
61 1/16 x 40 15/16 in



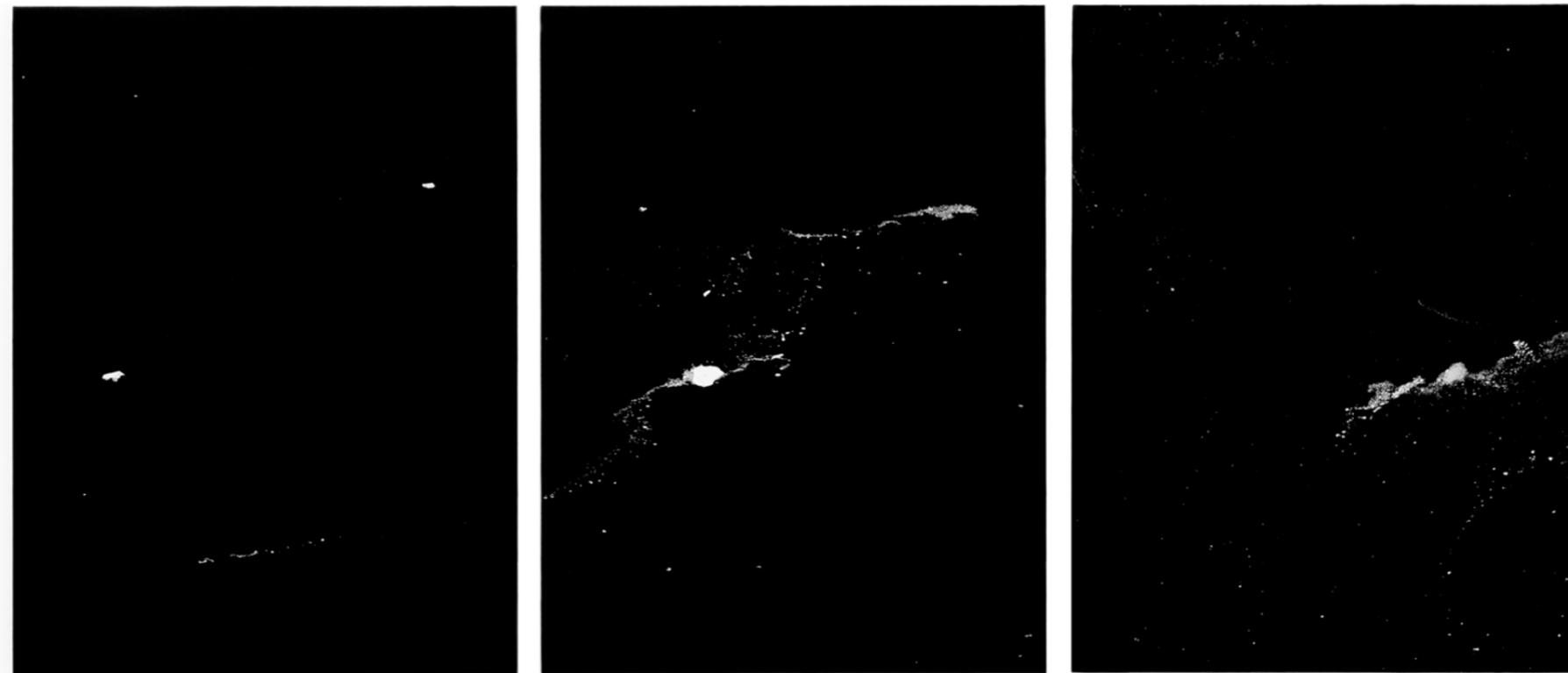
**Rashid Johnson**  
**Cosmic Slop Little Brother, 2012**  
black soap microcrystalline wax on board  
183 x 122 x 4 cm  
72 1/16 x 48 1/16 x 1 9/16 in



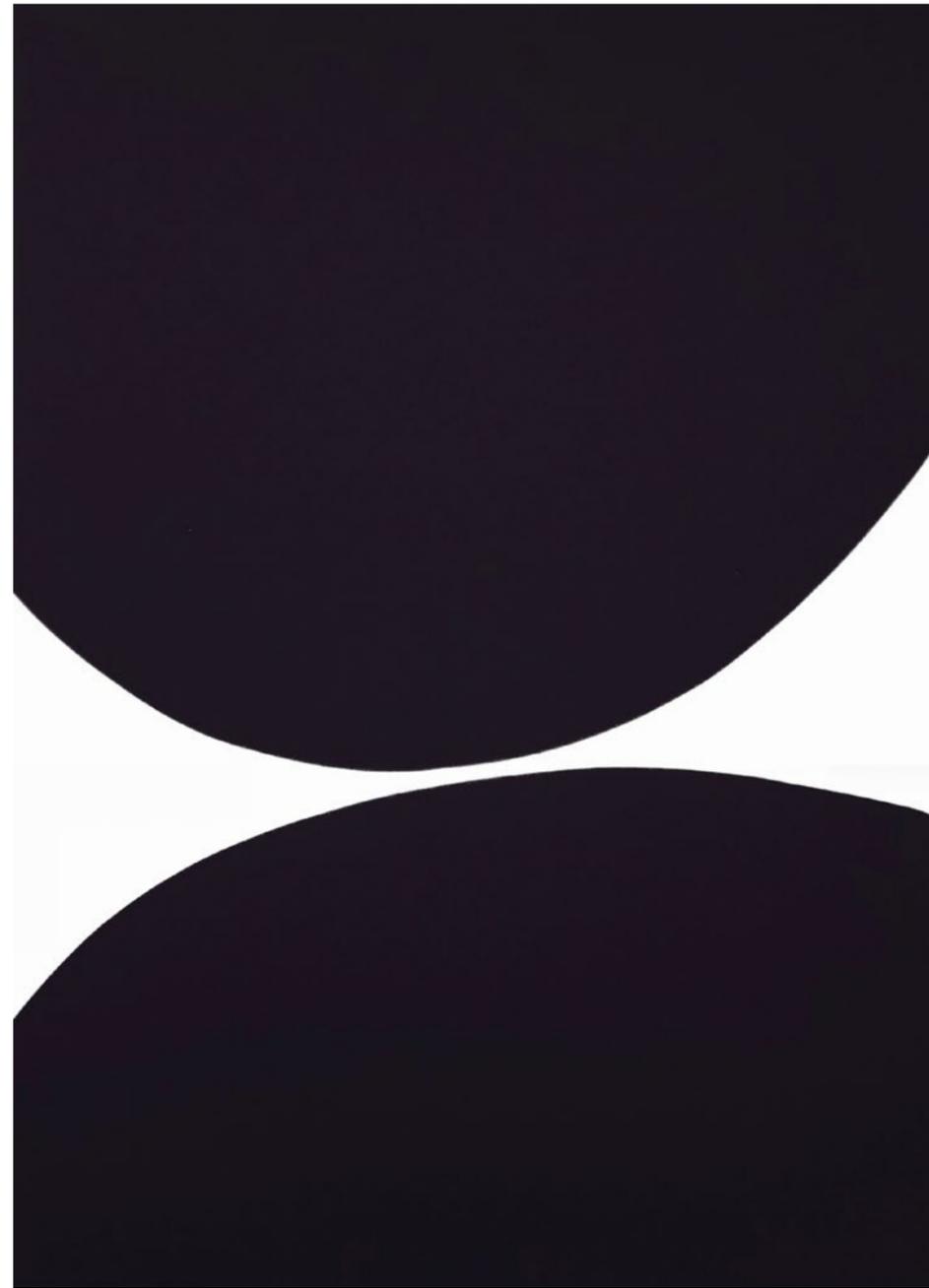
**Justin Brice**  
**Arctic Ocean III, 2019**  
acrylic carbon black gesso linen aluminum panel  
201.3 x 151.1 x 1.9 cm  
79 4/16 x 59 7/16 x 0 11/16 in



**Justin Brice**  
**Fram Strait Triptych, 2014/2017**  
acrylic carbon black gesso linen aluminum panel  
101.6 x 76.2 x 1.52 cm  
40 x 30 x 0 9/16 in  
3 panels each : 101,6 x 76,2 x 1,52 cm  
Edition 3/3 + 1 AP



**Paul Kremer**  
**Pinch02, 2021**  
acrylic on canvas  
183 x 137.2 cm  
72 x 54 in



**Allan McCollum**  
**Three individual «Plaster Surrogates», 1984**  
each signed 'Allan McCollum', dated 10-15-84 (M-15), 20-18-84 (M-18) and 5-19-84 (M-19)  
and inscribed with respective M numbering on the reverse  
enamel on cast hydrocal plaster in three parts  
a) 21,6 x 16,5 x 2 cm  
b) 15,2 x 12,7 x 2 cm  
c) 15,2 x 10 x 2,2 cm



**Paul Morrison**  
**Night Mist, 2014**  
acrylic on canvas  
38 x 50.5 x 3.5 cm  
14 15/16 x 19 14/16 x 1 6/16 in



**Hermann Nitsch**  
**Rov\_53\_97, 1997**  
acrylic on canvas  
188 x 300 cm  
74 1/8 x 118 1/8 in



**Nathalie Provosty**  
**Valence Violence Violets, 2018**  
oil on canvas  
213 x 116.8 x 2 cm  
83 13/16 x 45 15/16 x 0 12/16 in

**Hiroshi Sugimoto**  
**Chiesa Rossa, 1998**  
gelatin silver print in artist's frame  
148.5 x 119 cm  
58 7/16 x 46 13/16 in  
framing dimensions: 182.5 x 152.5 x 7.5 cm  
Ed.N° 1/5



**Hank Willis Thomas**  
**Now and Then/Then is Now, 2017**  
lenticular  
145 x 109 cm  
57 x 43 in  
Ed.3/5



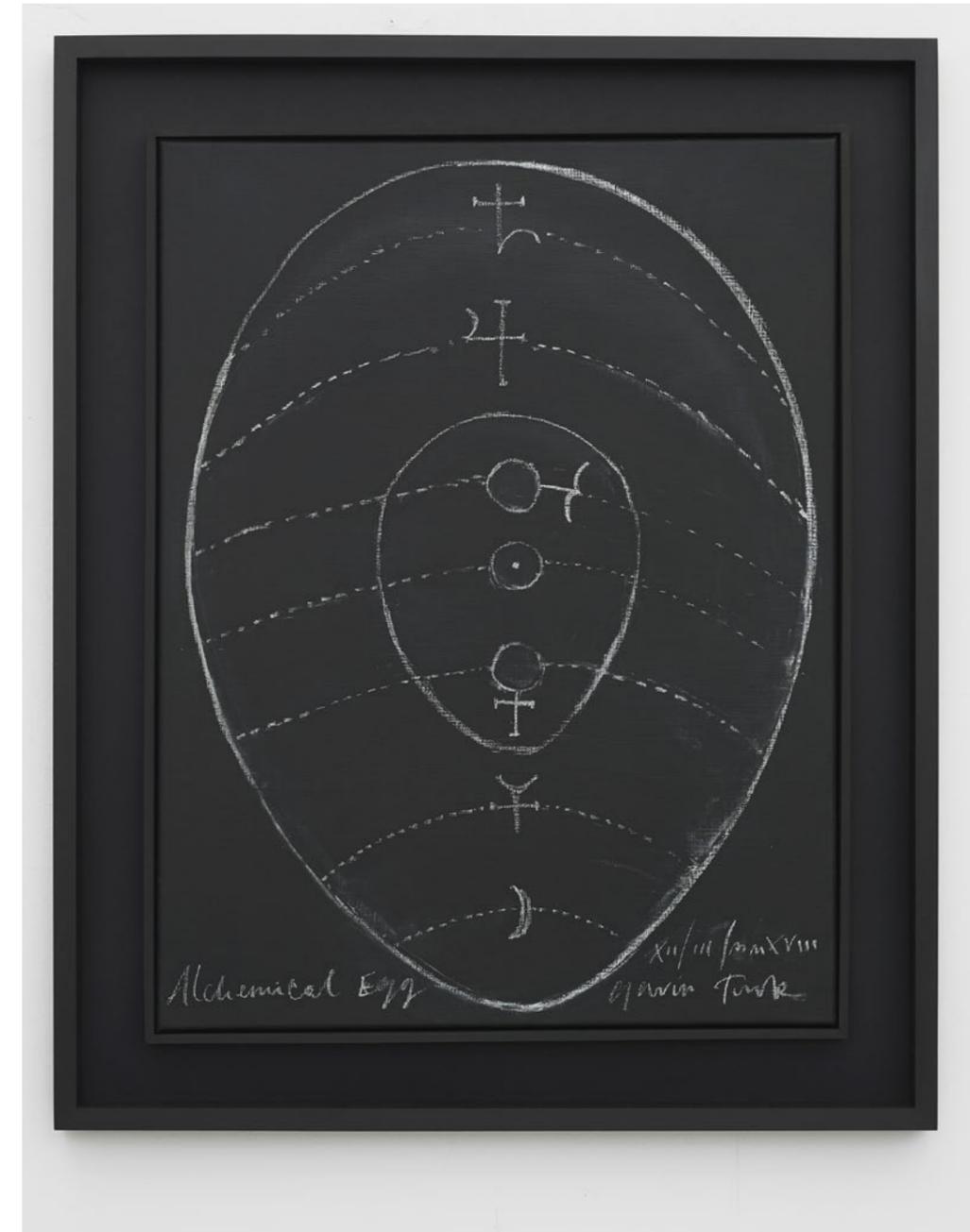
**Hank Willis Thomas**  
**Resistance in Black, 2021**  
Nero Marquina Levigato marble  
56.3 x 11.2 x 15.3 cm  
22 1/8 x 4 3/8 x 6 1/8 in  
Edition of 6 + 2 A.P.





**Gavin Turk**  
**Black Senza Titolo, 2012**  
oil on linen  
61.5 x 61.5 x 3.3 cm  
24 3/16 x 24 3/16 x 1 4/16 in

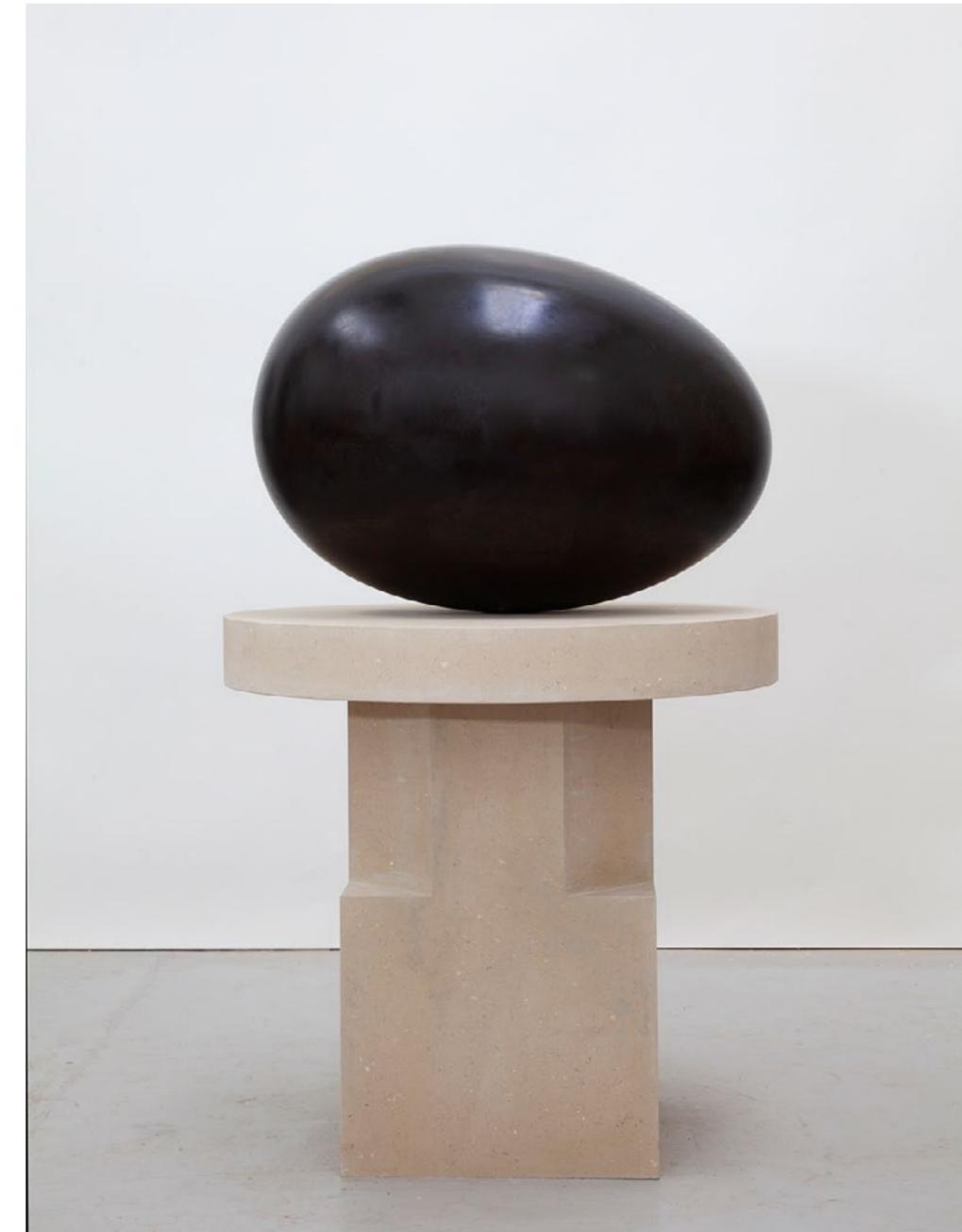
**Gavin Turk**  
**Alchemical Egg, 2018**  
Signed titled and dated (in roman numerals) on the front lower edge  
Chalk and blackboard paint on canvas  
80 x 60 x 2 cm  
31 7/16 x 23 9/16 x 0 12/16 in



**Gavin Turk**  
**Pistolettos Bags, 2018**  
screenprint on mirror finished stainless steel  
244 x 122 cm  
96 1/16 x 48 1/16 in



**Gavin Turk**  
**Ovum Black Umber, 2019**  
painted bronze  
58 x 58 x 80 cm  
22 13/16 x 22 13/16 x 31 7/16 in  
Ed.1/6





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