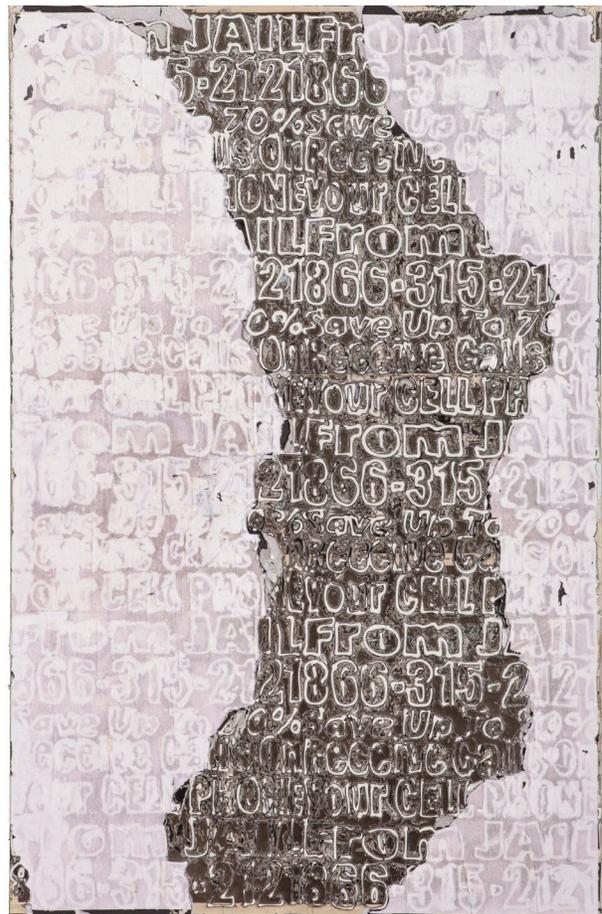




Mark Bradford: Receive Calls on Your Cell Phone From Jail

Through a signature collage process, Los Angeles-based artist Mark Bradford abstracts the geographic, political, and socioeconomic landscape of American cities. He composes his works by affixing found materials—such as billboard posters—to canvas, often searching his South Los Angeles neighborhood for signage and rooting his work in the realities of urban life. In his mixed-media compositions, paper replaces paint and is often torn, glued, sanded, and saturated with water to create a malleable pulp: materials that cling to the city are repurposed and given a renewed agency. While formally furthering the legacy of Abstract Expressionism, Bradford's work has a unique cartographic quality that visualizes how communities are mapped or quantified. Through his use of materials, Bradford's forms of abstraction look outward to respond to the charged social milieu in which they are made.

CAM presents the museum debut of *Receive Calls on Your Cell Phone From Jail*, a grid of thirty-eight paintings comprising posters that convey the challenges surrounding receiving collect calls from prison on one's cell phone. Many cell phone providers restrict subscribers from receiving collect calls, making this act of communication sometimes illegal and often difficult to enact, further isolating incarcerated individuals from the outside world. Exhibited on CAM's sixty-foot-long Project Wall, the installation can be “read” from left to right, embodying a melancholic passage of time. Bradford builds up and then tears down these works' surfaces, asking viewers to consider how incarcerated people might feel consumed, abandoned, and discarded by the criminal justice system.



Mark Bradford, *Receive Calls on Your Cell Phone From Jail* (detail), 2013.
Mixed media on canvas, 38 panels, each: 53 3/4 x 34 3/4 inches. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.



Audio Tour

Visit camstludio.org or ask for an iPod at the front desk to hear directly from the artist and curator on the audio tour.

Also on view, in the Front Room, is Bradford's single-channel video *Practice*, which depicts the artist playing basketball on an outdoor court. Wearing a makeshift outfit that includes a Los Angeles Lakers uniform and a voluminous antebellum-style hoop skirt, Bradford is impeded by both the wind and the physical constraints of his cumbersome wardrobe. He repeatedly stumbles and falls, only to recover and continue shooting baskets. Reflecting on the making of the video, the artist has said he "wanted to create a condition, a condition of struggle." Imbued with humor, irony, and absurdity, *Practice* demonstrates a determination to persevere in the face of cultural, gender, and racial obstacles, both past and present.

Mark Bradford (b. 1961, Los Angeles) lives and works in Los Angeles. In 2014 Bradford was presented with the National Medal of the Arts. In 2013 he was elected as a National Academician by the National Academy Museum and School of Fine Arts in New York. He is also a recipient of The MacArthur Fellowship (2009); the Wexner Center Residency Award (2009); and the Bucksbaum Award, granted by The Whitney Museum of American Art (2006). Recent solo shows include *Scorched Earth*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2015); *Sea Monsters*, Gemeentemuseum den Haag, The Hague (2015), and The Rose Art Museum, Waltham, Massachusetts (2014); *MATRIX 172*, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum, Hartford, Connecticut (2015); *Tears of a Tree*, The Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai (2015); and a major touring exhibition presented at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus (2010), which traveled to Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (2010); Dallas Museum of Art (2011); Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2011); and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2012). Bradford is co-founder of Art + Practice, an arts and education private operating foundation which provides life-skills training for foster youth as well as free, museum-curated art exhibitions and lectures to the community of Leimert Park, Los Angeles.

Special thanks to Hauser & Wirth.

Mark Bradford: Receive Calls on Your Cell Phone From Jail is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Jeffrey Uslip, Deputy Director for Exhibitions and Programs / Chief Curator.



Mark Bradford, *Practice* (still), 2003. DVD, 3 minutes. © Mark Bradford. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth.

Related Programs

Artist Talk

Thursday, May 5, 7:00 pm

Opening Reception

Friday, May 6, 7:00–9:00 pm

Contemporary Class: Art and Basketball

Thursday, May 26, 6:00 pm

\$10; free for members.

Register at camstl.org/class

Film Screening: Doin' It in the Park

Thursday, June 16, 7:00 pm

Lunch with the Curators

Friday, June 24, 12:00 pm

\$10; free for members.

Register at camstl.org/lunch

RE: Debtors' Prison

Saturday, August 6, 1:00 pm



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