

M. L^EBLANC

M. LeBlanc is proud to present
Talking To The Sun
a solo exhibition by Chicago-based artist Arnold J. Kemp.

Comprising *Talking To The Sun* are recent works from Kemp's disciplines of painting, sculpture, and printmaking. Throughout the past decade, Kemp dedicated a substantial portion of his practice to exploring the global social implications and archetypal use of the mask – specifically, as a performative marker of belonging, of othering, and of rebirth or worldmaking.

Stemming from the artist's ongoing material ritual of creating masks from household aluminum foil, *Talking To The Sun* brings together, under a single exhibition, the myriad outcomes from Kemp's processing of this subject. These simple aluminum masks are flattened through a printing press before being inked and reprinted onto found paper. Despite their clear reproducibility, each is actually a monotype, signaling one of Kemp's key dynamics - that of the plural and the singular. The ten works on view at M. LeBlanc, from Kemp's 'Index' series, are characteristic of this approach, each entirely unique, printed on 18th century handmade paper, and framed in steel.

New to Kemp's practice are the four large-scale collage and paint canvases that dominate the front of the gallery. Flattened aluminum masks form grids and columns in each work, bringing an uncanny chorus to the surface of the work, asking along the way - on which side of the canvas are you the viewer - do you wear the mask and look beyond the work or is your presence simply to surveil those that do - is this distinction fictitious, and if so, how would one know?

Lastly, In the gallery's central space, the exhibition is anchored by Kemp's 2020 limestone sculpture, *Nineteen Eighty Four*. Set atop a pedestal of untreated birch, the abstract stone form was initially made by Kemp as a teenager, only to be reincorporated as a work of readymade assemblage with select personal items roughly forty years later.

Talking To The Sun coincides with Kemp's exhibition at the University Of Chicago's Neubauer Collegium, titled *Less Like an Object and More Like the Weather* and curated by Dieter Roelstraete. The exhibition is on view through April 10th and can be visited by appointment.

Arnold J. Kemp (b. 1968 in Boston) lives and works in Chicago. Recent exhibitions of the artist's work include *FALSE HYDRAS* (2021) at JOAN in Los Angeles and *I COULD SURVIVE, I WOULD SURVIVE, I SHOULD SURVIVE* (2021) at Manetti Shrem Art Museum at the University of California at Davis. Over the past decade, Kemp received awards from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the Joan Mitchell Foundation, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, and Portland Institute for Contemporary Art. In addition, Kemp's practice has been reviewed at length in notable art publications and newspapers, including *ArtForum* (2021) and *The New York Times* (2021). Kemp's works are in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Studio Museum in Harlem, the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, the Portland Art Museum, the Schneider Museum of Art, and the Tacoma Art Museum. In 2020, Kemp collaborated with film producer Jordan Peele and director Nia DaCosta on MGM/Monkeypaw Productions remake of the 90's Chicago horror film 'Candyman', Kemp's works were featured in several scenes throughout the acclaimed picture.