

Galerie Buchholz

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Curtis Cuffie

Exhibition curated by Scott Portnoy

14 April – 20 May 2023

Galerie Buchholz New York is delighted to present an exhibition of sculptures by Curtis Cuffie (1955-2002). Born in Hartsville, South Carolina, Curtis Cuffie moved to New York as a teenager, first residing with his brothers in Brooklyn. In his adult life, Cuffie spent time unhoused in the streets of Manhattan where he found both inspiration and materials for his work as an artist. Cuffie's sculptures interpret material street culture in the 1990s and early 2000s, using discarded and found objects assembled and transformed into collaged figures that speak to both the abject reality of urban surplus as well as the magical alchemy of artistic creation. Built by Cuffie outdoors, primarily on the sidewalks around Astor Place and along the Bowery, his sculptures were subject to the whims of weather, police interference, and the sanitation department, as well as Cuffie's own continued interventions into his work. Despite their transience, Cuffie's constructions occupied a memorable space within the neighborhood landscape and the minds of those who encountered them. Friends and lovers, fellow artists, and students, particularly around Cooper Union, engaged intimately with his work. Public recognition also ensued, with photographers documenting his ephemeral practice and gallerists and curators presenting his work in more traditional commercial and institutional venues.

In collaboration with Galerie Buchholz, Blank Forms Editions will be publishing a book about Curtis Cuffie set for release in June 2023. This photobook, the first publication about Cuffie, seeks to honor the artist by collecting the efforts of two of his partners: Carol Thompson, who archived a great number of his 35mm photographs, and Katy Abel, a Cooper Square resident who took hundreds of snapshots of his art. *Curtis Cuffie* is edited by Scott Portnoy and Robert Snowden with Ciarán Finlayson, designed by Julie Peeters, and includes writing by the artist himself, Finlayson, and critic Alan Moore, as well as additional images by photographers Tom Warren and Margaret Morton.

Solo exhibitions by the artist include *Curtis Cuffie: Recent Sculpture* curated by Darrell Maupin and Kenny Schachter at Flamingo East (1992), *Meet me at the Margin* curated by Carol Thompson at A Gathering of the Tribes (1996), and *Heaven is Under your Feet* curated by Carol Thompson at 4th Street Photo Gallery (2000). Group exhibitions include *Assemblage: Reordering Chaos* curated by Arne Anton at American Primitive Gallery (1996), *Paradise 8: Baker's Dozen* curated by Kenny Schachter at Exit Art (1999), *Treasures of the Soul: Who Is Rich?* curated by Marcus Schubert at the American Visionary Art Museum, Baltimore (2000), *Souls Grown Diaspora* curated by Sam Gordon at Apex Art (2020), and *Greater New York* curated by Ruba Katrib at MoMA PS1 (2021).

Galerie Buchholz and Scott Portnoy would like to thank Katy Abel, Arne and Tina Anton, Robert Funk, Ciarán Finlayson, Sam Gordon, Ruba Katrib, Lawrence Kumpf, Darrell Maupin, Julie Peeters, Kenny Schachter, Robert Snowden, and Carol Thompson for their support of this exhibition.