

Blum & Poe is very pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Los Angeles-based artist Henry Taylor. This exhibition marks Taylor's second solo exhibition with the gallery and continues his exploration of portrait painting, while delving deeper into the history of oppression, exposing realities of the so-called American dream. His portrait subjects typically consist of friends or historic figures, which are painted with an unmediated sense of spontaneity and happy accidents throughout.

In addition to his customary portraits, Taylor introduces anonymous farm workers captured from WPA-era photographs. A more deliberate hand is at work on these portraits, elevating what could be simple documentation to that of a religious or imperial icon. On the gallery floor will be rows of dirt intended to mimic freshly plowed fields and a stately dinner table with a chandelier hanging overhead. The juxtaposition of manual labor versus genteel living creates a charged atmosphere, recalling the history of black American labor, as well as the realities of all forms of blue-collar work.

In this exhibition Taylor returns to a mainstay of his practice, using readily available materials to create social commentary. He routinely scours the neighborhood surrounding his Chinatown studio for discarded items, repurposing them into installations imbued with memories of oppression and the abuses of authority. The overall impact effectively demonstrates the subjective nature of equality within the United States.

Henry Taylor (born in Oxnard, California, 1958) received his bachelor of arts from California Institute of the Arts and has had solo exhibitions at MOMA PS1, Santa Monica Museum of Art, and Studio Museum in Harlem. He has been included in numerous group exhibitions, including Blues for Smoke, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Made in LA, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles; Human Nature: Contemporary Art from the Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; and 30 Americans, Rubell Family Collection, Miami, FL and North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC.

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