

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

McArthur Binion
DNA:Work and the Under:Conscious Drawings
September 10 - October 31, 2020

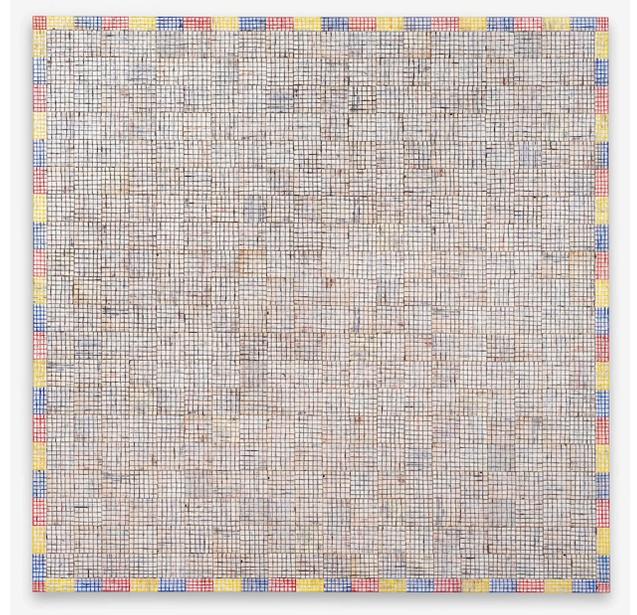
Gray Warehouse, 2044 West Carroll Ave,
Chicago

CHICAGO - Gray is pleased to announce a solo exhibition for McArthur Binion presenting recent works from the artist's series of *DNA:Work* paintings and *Under:Conscious* drawings. The exhibition opens on Thursday, September 10, at Gray Warehouse.*

McArthur Binion's inaugural exhibition at Gray debuts a series of monumental paintings and previously unseen works on paper. Binion's practice harnesses geometry as an index of labor and time, and applies it at a scale directly associated to his own body.

His works draw viewers into a realm of painting beyond Minimalism, one that injects the canonical grid with a deeply personal topography. At a distance, the artist's compositions present themselves as patterns of vivid colors demarcated by vibrating lines hand-drawn with oil-stick. Upon closer inspection, the surfaces reveal themselves to be comprised of hundreds of tightly collaged photographic and documentary excerpts from the artist's life, including reproductions of Binion's personal phone books, birth certificate, and pictures of his childhood home in Macon, Mississippi. Binion refers to this entanglement of formal and autobiographical elements as "the under-conscious: the character just under the surface ... close to the skin."¹ Acclaimed critic John Yau considers the content of these paintings inextricable from the form, writing, "Binion's formal mastery, his ability to wring so many possibilities out of his direct and straightforward labor, permeates the works with layers of meaning, beginning with his challenge to the idea that art could be objective and pure, that it could exist in a separate aesthetic realm untainted by life."²

Shown for the first time publicly are Binion's *Under:Conscious* drawings, a deeply introspective series which the artist began in 2014 as a means of encountering and accessing the raw roots of his practice. Employing elemental materials such as graphite, charcoal, colored pencil, and pen, Binion's drawings depict shapes composed entirely of evenly-distributed marks applied simultaneously by both his left and right hands. In an interview with Binion, artist Torkwase Dyson expands on this physical and mental exertion: "[Binion's drawings] convey a level of concentration that can only come from using everything [the] body is made of ... [they] have an Agnes Martin level of concentration with a Cy Twombly kind of labor of mark-making." Colliding the art historical and the personal, the *Under:Conscious* drawings



McArthur Binion, *DNA:Work*, 2019

present a redefined chapter of his career, one that resolutely centers on searching for new planes of self-recognition. In Binion's own words, "I'm not discovering the under-conscious, I'm becoming it."³

To accompany the exhibition, GRAY is pleased to present an illustrated catalogue featuring detailed views of the exhibition as well as a conversation between McArthur Binion and Torkwase Dyson.

ABOUT MCARTHUR BINION

McArthur Binion was born in Macon, Mississippi in 1946, and lives and works in Chicago. Binion received his BFA from Wayne State University in 1971, and his MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1973. His work has been the subject of major solo and group exhibitions at institutions including the Museo Novecento, Florence, Italy (forthcoming); Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, CA (2019); Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA (2019); Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL (2018); McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX (2018); Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI (2018); Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson, MI (2017); Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego, CA (2017); New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA (2017); National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC (2017); Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY (2016); Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Houston, TX (2012).

Binion's work can be found in numerous public and private collections including the Alford Collection of Contemporary Art at Rollins College, Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Winter Park, FL; Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH; Art Bridges Foundation; Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI; Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; Joyner Giuffrida Collection; Kemper Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO; McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson, MS; Mott-Warsh Collection, Flint, MI; National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC; New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA; Phillips Collection, Washington, DC; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; Strauss Family Foundation Collection, Rancho Santa Fe, CA; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH; Wayne State University, Detroit, MI; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY.

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* COVID-19 UPDATE

For the duration of this exhibition, Gray Warehouse will be open to the public 11 AM - 5 PM, Wednesday - Saturday. The health and safety of our staff and visitors remain our primary concern. In keeping with guidelines outlined by the CDC, NHS, and local authorities, we ask that both our staff and visitors adhere to these policies. For more information about measures related to COVID-19, please contact us at info@richardgraygallery.com.

For press inquiries, please contact Rebecca Daniel, 312.642.8877, rdm@richardgraygallery.com.

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1. "A conversation between McArthur Binion and Torkwase Dyson," *DNA:Work and the Under:Conscious Drawings* (Chicago: Gray Chicago/New York, forthcoming April 2020).
2. John Yau, "Recovering Abstraction: McArthur Binion's Intimate Grids," *New York Observer*, October 4, 2015.
3. "A conversation between McArthur Binion and Torkwase Dyson."