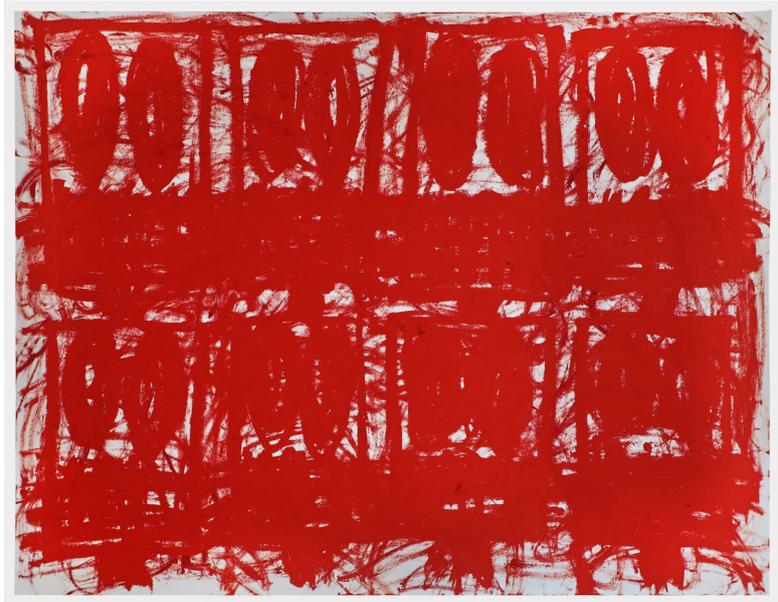


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Press Release

Online Exhibition

## Rashid Johnson. Untitled Anxious Red Drawings

[hauserwirth.com](http://hauserwirth.com)

Live date: Thursday 16 April 2020

With the online exhibition 'Untitled Anxious Red Drawings,' American artist Rashid Johnson introduces a selection of new works made since the onset of the global coronavirus pandemic. Using oil stick on cotton rag paper, the artist has here updated the visual language of his long-established Anxious Men series, in which deceptively crude archetypal faces express the fundamental tensions and traumas that course through contemporary life. By departing from his signature use of black wax to adopt a blood red medium for the first time in this well-known series, Johnson captures the 'life and death' urgency of an unprecedented moment that is now both separating and connecting communities around the globe. His Anxious Red Drawings could be read as history paintings for our times.

Whereas Johnson's Anxious Men series has been characterized by faces scratched into the pictorial surface in a kind of drawing through erasure, his new Anxious Red Drawings employ only the direct application of intense colour. The repeated motif in his new works suggest both the ongoing context of global instability and a new reality to which everyone must bear witness and in which everyone must participate.

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Johnson's frenetically drawn, iconic faces confront the viewer with a visceral immediacy. In this respect, the medium of drawing is critical for Johnson. 'I've never thought of drawings as a precursor to a more substantial object,' he has said. 'I've always thought of drawings as objects that are final'. At a time when the world has come to a standstill, Johnson reflects on the solitary nature of his practice and the autonomy that comes with drawing, he describes social distance as deeply complicated yet familiar as he is used to working alone. In this respect, he says, 'it has not changed much for my drawings, but it has changed my thinking'.

Rashid Johnson will donate 10% of his proceeds of the sale of works from this exhibition to the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for the World Health Organization, matching Hauser & Wirth's commitment to support the Fund through donation of 10% of its gross profits from all online exhibitions, as part of the gallery's ongoing #artforbetter initiative.

### About the artist

Born in Chicago in 1977, Rashid Johnson is among an influential cadre of contemporary American artists whose work employs a wide range of media to explore themes of art history, individual and shared cultural identities, personal narratives, literature, philosophy, materiality, and critical history. After studying in the photography department of the Art Institute of Chicago, Johnson's practice quickly expanded to embrace a wide range of media – including sculpture, painting, drawing, filmmaking, and installation – yielding a complex multidisciplinary practice that incorporates diverse materials rich with symbolism and personal history.

Johnson's work is known for its narrative embedding of a pointed range of everyday materials and objects, often associated with his childhood and frequently referencing collective aspects of African American intellectual history and cultural identity. To date, Johnson has incorporated elements / materials / items as diverse as CB radios, shea butter, literature, record covers, gilded rocks, black soap and tropical plants. Many of Johnson's works convey rhythms of the occult and mystic: evoking his desire to transform and expand each included object's field of association in the process of reception.

### COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund

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Under the umbrella of Hauser & Wirth's new global philanthropic and charitable initiative #artforbetter, we are donating 10% of gross profits from sales of all works in the online exhibitions to the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for the World Health Organization.

To learn more about the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for WHO please visit:

<https://covid19responsefund.org/>

#artforbetter

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Rashid Johnson  
Untitled Anxious Red Drawing  
2020

Oil on cotton rag  
97.2 x 127 cm / 38 1/4 x 50 in

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