

MEDIA ALERT

MITCHELL-INNES & NASH ANNOUNCES *THE PROBLEM*, A NEW PERFORMANCE PIECE CONCEIVED BY POPE.L FOR THE OPENING OF UNLIMITED AT ART BASEL IN BASEL

MONDAY, JUNE 13, 2016
6:00pm at Unlimited (Hall 1), Messe Basel



Pope.L, "Circa, Pope.L Studio, University of Chicago," 2015
Courtesy of the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York. © Pope.L. Photo: Nabiha Khan

Mitchell-Innes & Nash announces *The Problem*, a new performance piece conceived by Pope.L staged for the opening of Unlimited during Art Basel in Basel. For *The Problem*, a white gorilla emerges from a white stretch limo at the entrance of the fair. Spilling white plantains onto the ground, the gorilla enters Unlimited, and wanders through the convention center, looking for something. Its mate? Its cage? Its formal organization via an enactment of a ritual? The beast drops more white things as it wanders. Eventually, the entity finds what it is looking for: an exhibition space containing a set of paintings called *Circa by the famous negro artist Pope.L*. The gorilla ignores the paintings and searches behind them, finally extracting five fat stacks of currency. The creature exits, leaving behind a garden gnome painted completely white except for a black-faced nose.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

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| 6:00pm | A white limo pulls up to the entrance of Unlimited |
| 6:05pm | A large, white gorilla enters the convention center, and roams through the crowd, dropping unripe, white plantains onto the fair floor and stops in front of <i>Circa</i> at Mitchell-Innes & Nash's exhibition space |
| 6:20pm | The gorilla searches behind the <i>Circa</i> paintings and uncovers stacks of money, stuffing them into a satchel |
| 6:25pm | The gorilla leaves the exhibition space and drives away in the white limo |

In the performance, Pope.L plays with uncertainty, incongruity, humor and sociality. Our identification of the performance's persona, the creature, is influenced by the structure of our language – our conflicting babel of languages. What is seen is understood in the same yet different ways; the reader – the spectator – becomes the very crucible in which the message is developed like a photograph or cooked like a spoonful of heroin. The *problem once*

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inserted remains: what is shared is a corrosive and what is understood by all is a divisive elixir between individual interpretations, individual politics, and individual stupidities.

Moreover, the reality of a white creature roaming the halls of Art Basel is a kind of displaced repetition – a re-packaging, a re-caging — of what is perhaps the largest, most prestigious spectacle in the art world. The question arises, then, whether the nature of the performance acts as a kind of break from the spectacle or if it serves to celebrate it. The *problem* is not the performance out there, in them, but rather the performance, in here, in us.

Pope.L was born in 1955 in New Jersey. He currently lives and works in Chicago, IL, where he is an Associate Professor in the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Chicago. He has had solo exhibitions at institutions including the Art Institute of Chicago, the Carpenter Center at Harvard University, MOCA , Los Angeles, the Santa Monica Museum of Art, and the Kunsthalle Wien. The MIT Press published a monograph to accompany *The Friendliest Black Artist in America*, his 2002-2004 traveling survey exhibition. His work has been exhibited and performed at Museum of Modern Art in New York, The Whitney Museum in New York, Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, The New Museum in New York and the Renaissance Society in Chicago. Recent exhibitions and performances include *Radical Presence: Black Performance in Contemporary Art* at Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Texas, (traveled to the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; New York University's Grey Art Gallery, New York, The Studio Museum, New York and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco); *Flux This! With Pope.L and Special Guests* at Museum of Modern Art in New York, NY; and *The Long White Cloud*, Te Tuhi Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand.

Mitchell-Innes & Nash

Founded by Lucy Mitchell-Innes and David Nash, who previously headed the worldwide Contemporary and Impressionist & Modern Art divisions of Sotheby's, Mitchell-Innes & Nash places exemplary contemporary artists within a historical context, revealing a continuity of ideas and aesthetic virtuosity from the Modern era through the present day.

Mitchell-Innes & Nash's renowned exhibition program fosters excellence within artistic practice, while forging an informed dialogue between emerging and established internationally recognized artists. From acclaimed surveys of 20th century masters, such as Jean Arp, Anthony Caro, Jay DeFeo, Willem de Kooning, Leon Kossoff, Kenneth Noland, Roy Lichtenstein, and Nicolas de Stael, to solo exhibitions of Sarah Braman, Keltie Ferris, Daniel Lefcourt, Pope.L, Martha Rosler, and Jessica Stockholder, Mitchell-Innes & Nash has proven expertise in both advancing the careers of emerging artists and maintaining the superior standard set by established artists.

Join the "**Pope.L**" conversation on Instagram and Twitter by mentioning @miandn and using the #PopeL hashtag when posting.

Listings Information: Mitchell-Innes & Nash is located at 534 West 26th Street in Chelsea and 1018 Madison Avenue on the Upper East Side. Tel: 212 744 7400. | Web: www.miandn.com | Email: josie@miandn.com

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