

ROB PRUITT

## AMERICAN QUILTS 2018

Massimo De Carlo London is pleased to present *American Quilts 2018*, a new exhibition by artist Rob Pruitt.

For his third exhibition at Massimo De Carlo London, Rob Pruitt presents a series of new works based on American quilt patterns. Utilising a range of different materials and techniques, Pruitt expands upon the tradition of American handicraft to create works that feel both up to the minute and traditional. Thematically, the quilts speak to an American culture in turmoil, roiled by stark divisions at home and an abdication of leadership abroad.

Pruitt first explored quilt patterns in a body of work from 2010 dealing with the Amish rite of Rumspringa. The allegiance of Amish youth to their insulated world is tested in Rumspringa by exposure to the temptations of sex, drugs, and popular culture. It is this clash of traditional and new worlds from which the Rumspringa quilt paintings arose.

The crisis in American democracy spurred on by Donald Trump's presidency serves as a backdrop to Pruitt's latest exploration of quilt-making. In a traditional quilt, patterns often have symbolic meaning, interlocking wedding bands, and geese migrating south for the Summer. The geometric design is further imbued with humanity through the leftover scraps of fabric from which it is sewn. Using these elements of symbolism and design, quilts tell stories. It is this language that Pruitt uses to tell new stories of present-day American life.

Several paintings in the show are made with sheets of steel, on which patterns have been etched in rust. These works evoke the dying US industrial era of mining and manufacturing, and the empty promises of Donald Trump to bring back jobs in these industries.

Other quilts collage US currency to form traditional patterns like zig-zag and basket-weave. Areas filled with pennies are juxtaposed with areas of 100-dollar bills, suggesting an economic disparity that continues to widen.

In another painting variant, futuristic black and white quilts employ QR codes. In one, when the viewer scans the painting with a cell phone, they are directed to a URL address of a reading list for survival in the Trump era.

Several of the works in the show employ a palette of red, white and blue. In one, based on the classic checkerboard pattern, red and blue squares mix randomly, suggesting a map of the US electorate. In another, rendered with Pruitt's signature gradient technique, an updated version of the classic snail wave pattern portends a "blue wave" to come in the upcoming US midterm elections.

Pruitt has long employed craft traditions in his work, as well as experimenting with, and embracing

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new technology. Pruitt's work both comments on contemporary American culture as well as becoming part of it's stream. As such, *American Quilts 2018*, serves as a set of graphic danger signs and a document of America today.

### ROB PRUITT

Rob Pruitt was born in Washington, DC, and studied at the Corcoran College of Art and Design in Washington, DC, and Parsons School of Design in New York. His work has been included in numerous museum exhibitions, including a recent exhibition at the Kunsthalle Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland (curated by Daniel Baumann) in 2017; at the Brant Foundation in Greenwich, CT (2015), a 2013 mid-career retrospective at the Aspen Art Museum, a solo exhibition at Dallas Contemporary (2011), Museum of Contemporary Art, Detroit (2015), Freiburg Kunstverein (2012); Le Consortium, Dijon (2002); and group shows such as "Empire State" at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni, Rome (2012), "Pop Life" at Tate Modern (2009), and "Mapping the Studio" at Punta Della Dogana/Palazzo Grassi, Venice (2009). In 2009, he debuted the "Rob Pruitt's Art Awards," at the Guggenheim Museum, an award show for the art world fashioned after the Oscars. In 2011, he was commissioned by the Public Art Fund to install "The Andy Monument," a highly polished chrome sculpture of Andy Warhol (replete with shopping bags) in New York's Union Square near the site of Warhol's Factory.

#### **Hard Facts:**

Massimo De Carlo, London

55 South Audley Street

London W1K 2QH

From June 8th, 2018 until July 21st, 2018

Open Tuesday to Saturday, 10:00am – 6.00pm

Opening: Thursday 7th of June 2018, 6.00 to 8.00 pm

#### **For further information and materials:**

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