

Walter Price *Pearl Lines*

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Opening Friday, September 9, 4 – 9 pm

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PRESS RELEASE

We are very pleased to announce the first solo exhibition of New York-based artist Walter Price in our gallery. *Pearl Lines* consists of seven paintings on wooden panels, eleven works on paper, and the sculpture *The weight of thought* (2022), a suitcase with books attached to it.

Since 2016, Price has titled all his exhibitions *Pearl Lines*. In a 2021 interview with Enuma Okoro in the Financial Times he explains: *There's an effective magic to repetition. Like with a favourite song. I'd like to exhaust this title like a radio DJ does with a summer hit.*

Price's first exhibition in Germany, also titled *Pearl Lines*, took place in 2018 at the Kunstverein in Cologne. In 2019, a catalogue was published about the show with a text by Andrianna Campbell titled *Makin' It Funky, Keepn' It Fresh*.

It sounds like the motto for Price's unconventional and smart works, which deny all sorts of limitations and formal restrictions. As a painter, he allows himself to invest in drawing and combines the medium with painting in nearly all his exhibitions. He often glues drawings, notes or stickers on the painted surface, and instead of canvas, paints on wooden constructions, with the broad edges of the wooden objects becoming part of the painting.

The primary interest of Price lies in the force and impact of colour and abstraction in painting, which sometimes manifests in works that combine painting and found objects, like coffee cups or coat hangers, as in *Fate of the animals #3* (2021). In *Designated area* (2022), he attaches a smaller painting to the lower right corner of a bigger one. In *Talking in Circles* (2022), he creates a circular sculpture by connecting smaller paintings with hinges. Placed directly on the floor, the panels show painted heads – observers seen from behind – and abstract colour fields. In a similar way, five paintings of heads are combined in *Conversations* (2022), a wall-hung grouping of works. Another unconventional concept of Price is the way drawings are framed under a coloured plate of Perspex, and here Price frames the drawings in red.

From the beginning of his career, Price has been influenced by the life and work of the Afro-American painter Jacob Lawrence, and has also been inspired by the works of Norman Lewis, the self-trained Palmer Hayden, and Sam Gilliam, to name only a few. The texts of Hans Hofmann have helped him to understand his own interest in *wrongness*, which Price takes to be necessary to help us accept things which are normally excluded from the canon.

Price himself has a unique way of explaining what he is doing, so we asked the London-based art critic, curator and researcher Rianna Jade Parker to conduct an interview with the artist. The following is the result of the exchange:

Parker: What was the genius of this series, how have those intentions changed and what has remained the same?

Price: This series started with me thinking about colour psychology and how colours, based on proximity, can alter an image. I'm interested in how we perceive colour based on personal experiences and how that affects how we see. I decided to focus on the colour red because it's the prominent colour in the Berlin flag.

Parker: Can you speak to your artworks *Designated area* (2022) and *The weight of thought* (2022)?

Price: The painting *Designated area* is about the idea of the alpha male. I find humour in having a place card normally seen at a fancy dinner, on a couch, with a bunch of men eager to have a seat. Everyone thinks they are alpha. Most of us are unprepared. The work, *Weight of thought*, is an attempt to represent the mind as a symbol. When I think about the mind and how it functions, the suitcase and its function is similar because it represents movement, compartmentalising and story. Books also contain information.

Parker: What is integral to your process and what element do you enjoy the most?

Price: I'm actually not quite sure what's an integral part

of my process. Maybe it's reading a bunch of random books and science articles. Or losing over and over again in chess. I believe I love mixing colours the most.

Parker: As your audience and reach grows in the commercial art world, how do you remain grounded?

Price: Sheesh! I don't know. I think the best way for me to stay grounded is to continuously work towards being a better listener. Everyone wants to be heard, and I get heard, so listening is probably more valuable.

Parker: Has there been a specific time that you recall not having your artistic voice heard?

Price: I don't think I can recall a time where my artistic voice wasn't heard. Since second grade, I have used art to express myself whether it was with funny pictures or drawing on my own shoes and clothes with a sharpie. My family and friends always supported me making art.

Parker: What does generosity and openness mean to you as an artist? How do you emulate this?

Price: I'm not sure how to answer this. I'm just happy to be able to do this; it's a privilege. So when I have a show, I'm gonna give a SHOW!

Parker: Is there an artwork in this exhibition you are most proud of? (Why?)

Price: I love them all, I don't think there's one I'm most proud of.

Parker: Do you feel that you're part of a generation of artists who challenge existing barriers and assumptions about Black art?

Price: I could be; I definitely respect the position. We are too phenomenal to have a limit in the first place.

Parker: What themes and styles of image-making are you not willing to explore?

Price: I don't know. I'm a fish swimming upstream.

Parker: What research do you do?

Price: Well for this show a majority of my research is based on personal experience. I revisited books like *Edgar Cayce on the power of colour, stones, and crystals* by Dan Campbell and *Theory of Colours* by Johann Wolfgang Goethe. And I stared at Matisse's *Red Room* painting for about seventeen minutes.

Walter Price (* 1989 in Macon, Georgia, US) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Price has had solo exhibitions at Camden Art Centre, London (2021); Aspen Art Museum, Aspen (2019); MoMA PS1, New York (2018); and Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne (2018); and gallery shows at Greene Naftali, New York, and The Modern Institute, Glasgow.

Price's work was included in the 2019 Whitney Biennial, New York and in the 2018 Cleveland Triennial for Contemporary Art, MOCA, Cleveland. Other group shows include The Drawing Center, New York; Hessel Museum of Art, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York; LUMA Foundation, Zurich; and MAMCO Musée d'art moderne et contemporain, Geneva.

Price's work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo; Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris; and Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, amongst others.