



Matthew Day Jackson | *Domes with Matterhorn (after Bierstadt)*, 2023  
Wood, wood stain, acrylic paint, epoxy resin, fiberglass, UV pigment, lead, wood inlay frame, 252.3 x 388.4 x 5.4 cm | 99 3/8 x 152 7/8 x 2 1/8 in

**GRIMM is pleased to present *Forest Through the Trees*, by Matthew Day Jackson. Through referencing the canon of art history, many of Jackson's works examine the projection of human desires onto nature. In his most recent series, Jackson explores the history of landscape painting and its associated political and social functions. The exhibition's title alludes to the paradox of our present moment in which our perspective of the world, our surroundings and ourselves is limited rather than expanded by our engagement with technology. The prolific photographic record we are generating is a delimited reality which illustrates what we can (and cannot) tolerate as real. This constructed picture becomes a funhouse mirror, distorting the view of ourselves and our context.**

Drawing on sources such as Albert Bierstadt's sublime visions of the American West, Thomas Cole, Thomas Moran, as well as the Romantic works of Caspar David Friedrich, Jackson subverts the expectations of the landscape genre through his use of industrial materials and choice of unnatural color palette. We are presented with an otherworldly vision of the American landscape in these paintings. Although Jackson's compositions are reminiscent of those by the 18th and 19th century masters, he instead imbues each scene with an almost apocalyptic tone, drawing parallels with science fiction cinema.

Jackson's interest in these historical images introduces a tacit commentary surrounding the colonial pursuit of the American expansion and Manifest Destiny. By adapting and depicting the recognizable American landmarks used by his predecessors, Jackson subtly reminds the viewer that we are perennially tied to this history, as exemplified in our social, cultural and economic structures. In portraying iconic locations that many know only through reproduction, Jackson further underscores how such landmarks relate to American identity creation. In particular, contemporary sites like the Matterhorn at Disneyland and Mount Everest at Disney World, impart a sense of irony to the work. Although these are real places in the world we live in, we become extraterrestrial visitors to these manufactured scenes.

The artist employs intensive research and production processes to create objects that coincide with a reassembling of history. He views the combination of materials and references to disparate time periods as a metaphor for interconnectivity. His use of materials reflects the idea that our evolution is not only found within the slow adaptation of our bodies, but it is, *"also present in the materials we use to express our humanity over time, the evolving process of the creation of society, and the performance of culture."* Those who have shaped the cultural, social and political landscape in the United States, such as Harriet Tubman, Eleanor Roosevelt,

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Buckminster Fuller, J. Robert Oppenheimer, and others, have been influential in the iconographic and conceptual basis for Jackson's work. Accordingly, events that influenced the proliferation of American exceptionalism—the Apollo 11 moon landing, development of the American West, and the dropping of the atomic bomb—are rendered to imagine alternate outcomes and suggest the inherent falsehoods contained within such mythology.

Central to Jackson's practice is mythos of the artist's hand as well as the temporality of the artworks themselves. The works are composites, incorporate images sourced from landscape photography and painting as well as his own photography, adapted using Photoshop and AI, and allowing for experimentation with artifice and reality.

Jackson presents a jigsaw puzzle of history, stitched together by the connections that he illuminates. Ultimately, the gesture of the artist lies in Jackson's implementation of tonality and texture. In part thanks to his professional origins as a printmaker, he is especially concerned with the visual effects of compression and flattening. Throughout this series, Jackson implements a novel photomechanical CMYK process that allows him to apply and remove color with a laser. He works in layers of color on chiseled plywood and uses texture to create a feeling of real space. While the topography of each work invites the viewer to enter each scene, the foreboding palettes and seemingly abandoned landscapes simultaneously impose distance.

Jackson is exhibiting his first oval painting made in over a decade, which is a palimpsest of key works from this span of time. The oval and cameo are a pictorial convention often used in jewelry to portray a loved one, mythological figures or landscape. Jackson has used this framework to memorialize often complex and complicated figures as he read their biographies. In this new painting, Jackson cites the 17th century Flemish painter, Jan de Momper, and fuses a deep interest in anthropomorphic imagery, portraiture and science fiction. The end result is one that is uncanny and signature to Jackson's oeuvre marked by multifaceted and visible references combined with an irreverent use of materials and deep knowledge of process.

### About the artist

Matthew Day Jackson (b. 1974 in Panorama City, CA, US) lives and works in Brooklyn, NY (US). He received his BFA at the University of Washington, Seattle, WA (US) and his MFA at the Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ (US). He has also studied at the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, Skowhegan, ME (US) and obtained the NHRA Supercomp Dragster License at Frank Hawleys Racing School in Gainesville, FL (US).

Recent solo exhibitions include *Counter-Earth*, PACE, Seoul (KR); *Against Nature*, PACE, New York, NY (US); *Waterfalls and Birds*, Guesthouse, Wilson, WY (US) in 2021; *Flowers, Windows and Thistles*, Hauser & Wirth, Zurich (CH), *Audubon in the Anthropocene: Works by Matthew Day Jackson*, Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS (US) in 2020 and *Pareidolia*, GRIMM, Amsterdam (NL) in 2019.

*Study Collection XIII*, is from a long-running series which displays anthropological curiosities and synthesized many of the ideas, forms, colors and occasionally, material within an exhibition. This work is unique in the series, in that Jackson has relied almost entirely on hand built ceramic sculpture to create the figurative form. A mirrored surface enables a verso/recto view of the component parts.

Within many of his solo exhibitions, Jackson includes a walking stick, leaning in a corner. The walking stick is intended to reference the figure and more specifically, Jackson himself in relationship to the work on view. The walking stick is a tool to aid mobility, often used to safely traverse treacherous terrain.

A recorded interview by Jackson with musician, mountaineer, extreme skiing legend and local long-time Jackson Hole resident Bill Briggs will also be shown. Briggs is considered the pioneer of extreme skiing, the first to descend the Grand Teton, the highest peak in the Teton Mountain range. Briggs is also arguably the most prolific artist of the region, playing thousands of shows as a part of the weekly Hootenanny in Moose, WY and at The Stagecoach in Wilson, WY. The Stagecoach is at the base of Teton Pass, and is the de facto headquarters for Jackson Hole's backcountry ski scene, which Briggs helped create. Adjacent to the video is a photograph of the iconic ski line, signed by Bill Briggs. This photograph is a part of Jackson's personal collection as he sees this ski line not only as an important historic document, but also as an artistic gesture created only through deep knowledge of material and process, while displaying impeccable skill and expression that is unique to its author.

His work can be found in the collections of international institutions such as Astrup-Fearnley Museum, Oslo (NO); Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia (IT); Domus Collection, New York & Beijing (US, CN); High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA (US); Kunstmuseum, The Hague (NL); Museo d'Arte Moderna, Bologna (IT); Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA (US); Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam (NL); Pinault Collection, Paris (FR); Rosenblum Collection, Paris (FR); Rubell Museum, Miami, FL and Washington, DC (US); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (NL); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (NL); Vanhaerents Art Collection, Brussels (BE); Whitney Museum for American Art, New York, NY (US) and Zabłudowicz Collection, London (UK).

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