

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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PRESS RELEASE

Nayland Blake

September 12 to October 25, 2025

Opening: Thursday, September 11, 6:00 to 8:00 PM

Matthew Marks is pleased to announce **Nayland Blake**, the next exhibition in his galleries at 522 & 526 West 22nd Street. For decades, Nayland Blake has made vital contributions to contemporary art and queer culture as an artist, curator, writer, and educator. The exhibition will be in three parts and will be the largest show of their work in New York in almost twenty years.

Nayland Blake: Sex in the 90s surveys Blake's landmark work created in the midst of the ongoing AIDS crisis and the culture wars of the 1990s. Curated by Beau Rutland, this part of the exhibition features over twenty-five sculptures, videos, and drawings that explore sexuality, gender, race, and queer histories. Many of the works are on view for the first time in nearly thirty years.

Inside: curated by Nayland Blake, the second part of the exhibition, includes works by fourteen artists: Joseph Cornell, Vincent Fecteau, Richard Foreman, Robert Gober, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Janet Olivia Henry, Ray Johnson, Wangechi Mutu, Edward Plunkett, Betye Saar, Lucas Samaras, Judith Scott, Nancy Shaver, and Frederick Weston.

"This show has a selfish origin," Blake says in their curatorial statement, "these are all works that I have wanted to be in the presence of, to wander inside of, to refresh my eyes and mind with. I've wanted to trace the actions of hands and fingers as they shape and shift fragments, to catch a bit of the artists' delight at finding the exact place for the element they've been keeping around or just stumbled over. These things are made, not manufactured, and they feed us through recording the time their creator spent with them. I'm tired of walking into places and being stunned, of pulling out my camera so that I can get through the experience of a show and supposedly remember it later on. I'm tired of the suggestion that something has to be huge to matter. One of my favorite experiences as a child was staring into my Viewmaster, peering at the little worlds within. Everything in here is made by someone I respect, who has made me rethink what is possible in my own making. They may be modest in scale, but they are rich."

The final part of the exhibition, **Session**, will be an installation of Blake's new sculptures, which build upon the artist's *Restraint* works of the late 1980s.

The exhibition coincides with the publication of *Nayland Blake: My Studio Is a Dungeon Is My Studio, Writings and Interviews 1983–2024*, edited by Jarrett Earnest, published by Duke University Press.

Nayland Blake (b. 1960) lives and works in Dutchess County, New York and is a Professor of Studio Arts at Bard College. Their work was included in the 1991 and 2022 Whitney Biennials, the 1993 Venice Biennale, and the landmark exhibition "Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art" at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1994. In 2019 a full-scale retrospective of their work was presented at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles and the MIT List Visual Arts Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Nayland Blake is on view at 522 & 526 West 22nd Street from September 12 to October 25, 2025, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM.

For additional information please call 212-243-0200 or email inquiries@matthewmarks.com.