

## MARIAN GOODMAN GALLERY

For immediate release

### **Daniel Boyd**

*Dreamland*

12 January - 24 February 2024

Opening reception: Friday, 12 January, 6-8 pm

Marian Goodman Gallery is pleased to present our first solo exhibition of Daniel Boyd, *Dreamland*, which will be on view from 12 January – 24 February 2024.

One of Australia's most highly regarded artists and the 2014 winner of the prestigious Bulgari Art Prize, Daniel Boyd has been showing in Australia and internationally since 2005. He has participated in the 56th Venice Biennale (2015), as curated by Okwui Enwezor, and the 20th Biennale of Sydney (2016), and was the subject of a 2022 retrospective at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. His exhibition *RAINBOW SERPENT (VERSION)*, a joint project with Gropius Bau, Berlin and IMA, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane recently concluded on 16 December 2023.

With his complex and divergent works spanning an array of historical references from landscape and Western-style portraiture to the traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, Boyd seeks to negotiate the identity of art, history and cultural survival through his investigations of oppressed and colonial culture. His questioning of what is defined as history blends seamlessly into the confluence of his work, where he brings to the forefront the often overlooked and discarded history of his Aboriginal ancestors. "We have the oldest continuous culture on earth and it's important to celebrate that," said Boyd.

In the paintings on view, Boyd punctuates the canvas with dots or 'lenses' with a mixture of black paint and archival glue. Unlike Aboriginal dot painting, which was traditionally created with sand, or on the body, as a form of storytelling, his mark-making is reflective of the Gestalt theory of perception. The mind interprets an organized whole through the multitude of lenses, a form of gestalt, as a means to perceive the work; additionally, the profusion of dots represents the collective viewpoint. These acts of intervention through a 'lens' that both inscribes and erases its subject, are informed as well by the allegory of Plato's Cave (the metaphorical realm between reality and interpretation), and the search for dark matter, where the unseen and the in-between carry meaning.

Within the subject matter of his work, Boyd brings attention to, and reveals his rejection of, Western traditions as canon and conveys his desire to revise the way history is taught. By imprinting dots that ultimately obfuscate the illustrated subject, Boyd creates a connection to "blackness, porosity and history," as noted by Asad Raza.

Boyd's explorations of Western civilization focus on cultural objects, the longing for landscape, and portraits that are both historic and personal. Revisiting and revising the perspective of who is notable, he questions the motivations and desires to elevate specific aesthetic forms, challenging what is defined as archetypal, and examining received hierarchies on beauty and race. In questioning social structures, he addresses who is given representation in the arts. In his paintings, he depicts Apollo Belvedere, a Greek god of harmony, beauty, and perfection, and Elizabeth Taylor, who played the Egyptian queen Cleopatra in the 1963 film of the same name.

First Nation culture is imbued in works that carry both biographical and historical significance for Boyd; in *Untitled (GB17)*, he depicts his maternal grandmother at a mission wedding, which is in part

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a loving tribute as well as a reminder of the many ways that colonialists controlled indigenous Australians. Similarly, paintings of a sunset near his grandmother's home, *Untitled (TALTIHHASFATS)*; or one showing Aboriginal men obscured in the rainforest, *Untitled (IFITFOMADFSF)*, as well as the silhouette of a younger Aboriginal person *Untitled (HBOAIAZ)*, offer evidence of the dream of a homeland. A boomerang sits above a horizon line, in *Untitled (AIAFNSCAI)*, conveying cultural appropriation of the object; *Untitled (IKTWMICAHFT)* features a ceremonial figure collected by Matisse, underscoring the assimilation of indigenous history in modernism's past.

The dot paintings have a textured quality about them, a three-dimensional feel which changes with how and where it is presented with the use of angle and light. The surface of the painting almost feels as if it can be activated. The employing of optical and translucent convex lenses within his work conversely exposes what the viewer cannot see, serving as a reflection of history as dispersed extracts, distorted and revised. Boyd says, "I wanted them to be alive. I wanted a kind of movement in them, and a continuum through activation, so that audience activates them. It gives them the opportunity to grow and gather association so it's not on the surface, it's a convex. The light catches as you move coming in front of it."

Daniel Boyd was born in 1982 in Cairns. Now a resident of Sydney, Boyd studied art at the Australian National University's School of Art & Design in Canberra. His heritage spans several tribes including Kudjala, Ghungalu, Wangerriburra, Wakka Wakka, Gubbi Gubbi, Kuku Yalanji, Bundjalung, Yuggera and ni-Vanuatu.

Past solo exhibitions include *Daniel Boyd: Treasure Island*, his 2022 exhibition at the Art Gallery of NSW, Roslyn Oxley Gallery and his first at Mori Gallery; he participated at Melbourne Arts Festival in 2010. Okwui Enwezor selected Boyd to take part in the Venice Biennale in 2015; in the same year, he was the winner of the inaugural Young Artist Award, as given by the Melbourne Art Foundation Awards for the Visual Arts. Boyd joined seven of his fellow art practitioners in a new artist-in-residence trial on Cockatoo Island, Sydney, in 2009. In 2008, the Queensland Art Gallery's Gallery of Modern Art included his work in *Contemporary Australia: Optimism*.

Please join us at the opening reception for the artist on Friday, January 12<sup>th</sup>, from 6-8 pm. For further information, please contact Linda Pellegrini, Head of Communications and Events, at [linda@mariangoodman.com](mailto:linda@mariangoodman.com), or 212 977 7160.