

Meliksetian MB Briggs

Todd Gray

Time Machine / Hippie Dandy

June 10 - August 13, 2016

Opening Reception:
Friday, June 10th 6-8pm



Meliksetian | Briggs is pleased to present *Time Machine / Hippie Dandy*, a solo exhibition of new work by artist **Todd Gray** featuring photo based work, painting and ephemera complimenting his social sculpture / performance piece *Ray* running concurrently and for the duration of the *Made in LA* biennial at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

Gray's new body of work, *Time Machine / Hippie Dandy*, is the outgrowth of his "quiet performance," *Ray*, a work for the late musician Ray Manzarek, his close friend, mentor and co-founder of the legendary band *The Doors*. When Manzarek died in 2013, his widow Dorothy allowed Gray to borrow the musician's complete wardrobe, luxurious designer clothes that are sometimes avant-garde, and sometimes flamboyant, befitting a rock star. For one complete year beginning on May 20, 2014, Gray embarked on the performance, a social sculpture as he refers to it, wearing only clothes belonging to Manzarek, a subtle shift that impacted the routines of Gray's daily life. Conducted outside the auspices of any institution, the gesture was not reducible to either an artistic or memorial impulse. Gray refused to formally document the performance piece photographically or by using video adhering to the tropes of conceptual art, lest the documentation became a surrogate for the the physical experience of the work itself. The only way for the viewer to engage with the social sculpture was to be in Gray's presence during the time he wore the clothing.

Instead, over the next year Gray used the conceptual foundation of the performance as a platform to make a new body of work. He gathered quotidian snapshots taken of him by family and friends during the course of the performance, then commissioned sign painters from Ghana to make paintings based on these snapshots. Gray photographed the painted canvases and added them to his digital archive of images. As in previous series, Gray then re-contextualized this archive via juxtaposition with images of the Ghanaian landscape, architecture, and people, along with images of the cosmos from the Hubble Telescope, using found antique frames, as well as artist-made frames as a structuring device for the art works.

Time Machine / Hippie Dandy at Meliksetian | Briggs is comprised of Gray's new photo-based sculptural work, an installation of the original paintings made by the Ghanaian sign painters, as well as, ephemera from the artist's year long performance piece, *Ray*. The new work remains strongly autobiographical, commenting on the relationship with his mentor and friend, Ray Manzarek. Like his previous exhibition at the gallery, *Exquisite Terribleness*, combining images from the Ghanaian landscape with work made in the U.S. problematizes Gray's position within the African Diaspora, while referring to the celebrity and music culture of Los Angeles that Gray was a part of and participant in, and addressing notions of identity, memory, history and loss.

Todd Gray (b. 1954) lives and works in Los Angeles and Ghana. He received both his BFA and MFA from the California Institute of the Arts (Cal Arts). Gray works in multiple formats including photo-based work as well as sculpture and performance. Gray will be re-staging the performance piece, *Ray*, for the duration of this year's *Made in LA* biennial, entitled *a, the, though, only*, curated by Aram Moshayedi and Hamza Walker open from June 12 to August 28, 2016.

Past solo and group exhibitions include the Luckman Gallery, Cal State University, Los Angeles, Studio Museum, Harlem, NY, USC Fisher Museum of Art, Los Angeles, California African American Museum, Los Angeles, Tucson Museum of Art, Detroit Museum of Art, Renaissance Society, University of Chicago among others. Performance works have been presented at institutions such as the Roy & Edna Disney Cal/Arts Theater, REDCAT, Los Angeles, Armory Center for the Arts, Pasadena, and the Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles. A partial list of Gray's work in public collections includes the National Gallery of Canada, SFMoMA / San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, LACMA / Los Angeles County Museum of Art, MOCA / Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, the University of Connecticut and the Studio Museum, Harlem.