

SEANKELLY

NATHAN MABRY

SHAPESHIFTER

MARCH 29 - MAY 4, 2013

OPENING RECEPTION: MARCH 28, 6-8PM

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****



Nathan Mabry studio, 2013. Photo by Robert Weidemeyer.

March 20, 2013 – Sean Kelly announces *Shapeshifter*, an exhibition of new work by Nathan Mabry. This is the artist's first exhibition with the gallery and will include sculptures from two different series of work.

Mabry's *Heavy Handed (Separation Anxiety)* and *Heavy Handed (Tocca Ferro/Horns Up)* will be presented in gallery two. The *Heavy Handed* works are large-scale sculptures made of steel that resemble block-like human hands, making gestures ranging from the benign to the profane. They reference sign language, colloquial symbols and other forms of gestural communication that can be simultaneously illustrative and provocative.

In gallery three, Mabry will exhibit his newest series of work, which comprises oversized terra-cotta heads resting atop aluminum bases that reference minimalist sculpture, specifically Donald Judd's milled aluminum works. The heads, hand-sculpted by Mabry, are derived from architectural elements—tenon heads—found at Chavín de Huántar, a pre-Columbian religious and political site built by the Chavín people in Peru. The Chavín religion involved human to animal transformation, or shapeshifting, achieved through the use of hallucinogenic drugs. Mabry's heads incorporate animals commonly associated with Chavín iconography, specifically jaguars, eagles and snakes.

The stark contrast of these ancient figurative forms to the cool reserve of their abstract minimalist bases creates, in Mabry's words, a "crashing together" of cultural aesthetics; this juxtaposition of ancient and contemporary is a common theme in Mabry's oeuvre.

Shown together, these two bodies of work offer an opportunity to see the broad range of Mabry's sculptural vocabulary, his complex visual language and his underlying use of humor to connect with the viewer. While the exhibition title, *Shapeshifter*, is a specific reference to Chavín iconography, it is also a reference to Mabry's ability to move between artistic styles and find inspiration from varied sources.

Nathan Mabry received his BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute and his MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles. His work is in the permanent collections of numerous institutions including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; and the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, La Jolla. His work has recently appeared in exhibitions at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, La Jolla; the Parrish Art Museum, Southampton; the Las Vegas Art Museum; the 176 Zabłudowicz Collection, London, and the Vanhaerents Art Collection, Brussels. Mabry will be the subject of a solo exhibition, *Sightings*, at the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, which opens April 13th and runs through July 17th.

Concurrently, in gallery one, Sean Kelly will present *Meshes of the Afternoon*, a group painting exhibition.

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