

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

McArthur Binion  
*DNA:Work and the Under:Conscious Drawings*  
September 10 - October 31, 2020

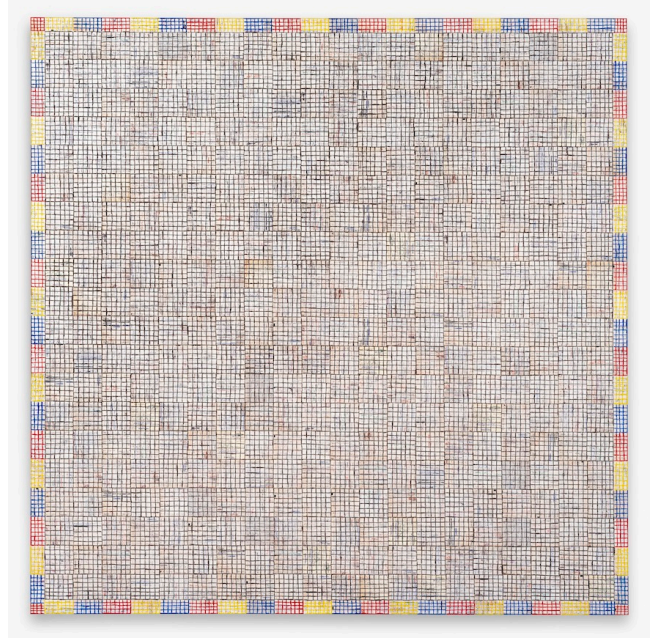
Gray Warehouse, 2044 West Carroll Ave, Chicago

CHICAGO - Gray is pleased to present *DNA:Work and the Under:Conscious Drawings*, the gallery's first exhibition with McArthur Binion. Debuting eight paintings and seven drawings from the artist's *DNA:Work* and *Under:Conscious* series, the exhibition opens on Thursday, September 10 at Gray Warehouse in Chicago.

McArthur Binion's painting series *DNA:Work* is an index of time, labor and identity, repurposing the Minimalist grid to examine a deeply personal narrative. Using the scale of his own body, Binion builds compositions from vivid, geometric patterns demarcated by an oil-stick grid. Up close, each painting reveals a substrate of tightly collaged and rhythmically arranged reproductions of personal documents—pages from the artist's phone book, his birth certificate and photographs of his childhood home in Macon, Mississippi. Binion's pared-down combination of color and form compresses a breadth of influences—personal history, relationships, writing, and memory—all absorbed throughout a life dedicated to making. As art critic and poet John Yau describes, Binion's *DNA* paintings are "deeper than autobiography ... [his] formal mastery, his ability to wring so many possibilities out of his direct and straightforward labor, permeates the works with layers of meaning, beginning with his challenge to the idea that art could be objective and pure, that it could exist in a separate aesthetic realm untainted by life."<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the *DNA:Work* paintings, the exhibition debuts a suite of works on paper titled the *Under:Conscious Drawings*. Binion created the series in 2014 as a means of accessing the roots of his practice. Using graphite, charcoal, colored pencil and pen, Binion's drawings are composed of evenly-distributed marks applied simultaneously with both hands. In a conversation with Binion, artist Torkwase Dyson expands on this physical and mental exertion. "[Binion's drawings] convey a level of concentration that can only come from using everything [the] body is made of," states Dyson. "[They] have an Agnes Martin level of concentration with a Cy Twombly kind of labor of mark-making." In Binion's own words, "I'm not discovering the under-conscious, I'm becoming it."<sup>2</sup>

To accompany the exhibition, GRAY is pleased to present an illustrated catalogue featuring detailed views of the exhibition as well as a conversation between McArthur Binion and Torkwase Dyson.



McArthur Binion, *DNA:Work*, 2019

## ABOUT MCARTHUR BINION

McArthur Binion was born in Macon, Mississippi in 1946, and lives and works in Chicago. Binion received his BFA from Wayne State University in 1971, and his MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in 1973. His work has been the subject of major solo and group exhibitions at institutions including the Museo Novecento, Florence, Italy (forthcoming); Museum of the African Diaspora, San Francisco, CA (2019); Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA (2019); Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL (2018); McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX (2018); Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI (2018); Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson, MI (2017); Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego, CA (2017); New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA (2017); National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC (2017); Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY (2016); Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, Houston, TX (2012).

Binion's work can be found in numerous public and private collections including the Alford Collection of Contemporary Art at Rollins College, Cornell Fine Arts Museum, Winter Park, FL; Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Oberlin, OH; Art Bridges Foundation; Cranbrook Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, MI; Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI; Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; Joyner Giuffrida Collection; Kemper Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO; McNay Art Museum, San Antonio, TX; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson, MS; Mott-Warsh Collection, Flint, MI; National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington, DC; New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA; Phillips Collection, Washington, DC; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; Strauss Family Foundation Collection, Rancho Santa Fe, CA; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH; Wayne State University, Detroit, MI; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY.

—

### \* COVID-19 UPDATE

For the duration of this exhibition, Gray Warehouse will be open to the public 11 AM - 5 PM, Wednesday - Saturday. The health and safety of our staff and visitors remain our primary concern. In keeping with guidelines outlined by the CDC, NHS, and local authorities, we ask that both our staff and visitors adhere to these policies. For more information about measures related to COVID-19, please contact us at [info@richardgraygallery.com](mailto:info@richardgraygallery.com).

*For press inquiries, please contact Rebecca Daniel, 312.642.8877, [rdm@richardgraygallery.com](mailto:rdm@richardgraygallery.com).*

*Connect with us on [Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)*

1. John Yau, "Recovering Abstraction: McArthur Binion's Intimate Grids," New York Observer, October 4, 2015.

2. "A conversation between McArthur Binion and Torkwase Dyson," DNA:Work and the Under:Conscious Drawings (Chicago: Gray Chicago/New York, forthcoming April 2020).