

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## MARC STRAUS

**New Work by Native American Artist  
Jeffrey Gibson at MARC STRAUS Gallery  
(Oct. 25 – Dec. 13, 2015)**



Jeffrey Gibson, *American History*, 2015

wool, steel studs, glass beads, artificial sinew, metal jingles, acrylic yarn, nylon fringe, canvas, wood  
89 x 66 x 5 inches

**Opening Reception  
October 25, 6pm–8pm**

**NEW YORK**—MARC STRAUS presents a solo exhibition of a new body of work by Jeffrey Gibson on view from October 25 to December 13.

Jeffrey Gibson (b. 1972), who is half Choctaw and half Cherokee, creates sculptures and paintings that intermingle more traditional Native American art with contemporary art and culture. Contemporary pop culture and Native American craftsmanship coexist comfortably, resulting in an amalgam of the artist's vast personal interests in popular music and literature, his political views, and his rich heritage.

The show presents 15 new works that bring together elements of indigenous art and craft, politics, music, fashion, urban subculture, and art history that include Gibson's famous, elaborately embroidered punching bags (of which only 38 exist in the world today); beaded wall hangings; monochromatic raw-hide paintings; and life-sized sculptures.

Almost all the works in the show contain text that is charged with personal meaning and political themes, elaborately embroidered in beadwork. Gibson does not consider these works as purely fine art, stressing that design too can have powerful content. Texts include appropriated phrases from popular song lyrics, social movements and, as of recently, Gibson's own writings. His use of language is similar to that of artist, educator and activist, Sister Corita Kent, who like Gibson does, arranged words in scattered and atypical formatting. Sentences are no longer a simple left to right read; they become fragments of a thought floating in one's mind.

In this exhibition, the two life-sized figures are made from ceramic heads perched on wooden armatures that are draped with heavily adorned cloaks. These beings resemble mythical creatures with secrets to reveal.

Embodying the vitality of Native American powwow dancers, the intricately embellished punching bags are fully remade but maintain the power of its former, pugilistic identity. For Gibson these punching bags personify a range of characters: punks, goths, rockers, queers, dancers, and the underdogs, all of whom have at one point in history, lived life as outsiders. The punching bags acknowledge Gibson's heritage but at the same time adamantly reject boundaries or associations with any specific culture.

In his new series of beaded wall hangings where the artist references textiles and blankets traditionally worn as robes, Gibson uses graphics and text to allude to immediate social issues. The thoughts behind his activist statements are revealed and become personal reveries. In *American History*, a beaded quilt composition, Gibson remembers James Baldwin's famous words,

*American history is longer, larger, more various, more beautiful, and more terrible than anything anyone has ever said about it.*

Gibson explores a greatly reduced palette in his new monochromatic paintings. Painted on rawhide, the hardedge geometric shapes accentuate the work's materiality; reminding the viewer that it was once was a living being. In *Document 2015*, a full-size deer hide painted in gray, monochrome hues combine modern abstraction with a great reverence for all living creatures.



Gibson's visual language is bold, colorful and intricate, often using geometric arrangements that convey tempo, rhythm, interwoven colors, repetition, variation and silence. The sense of community is an important aspect to Gibson's work, given that the process of creating an artwork as intricate as his is a laborious one, which takes a team of studio assistants to complete, all of whom the artist regards as family.

### **About Jeffrey Gibson**

Jeffrey Gibson attended The Art Institute of Chicago (BFA) and The Royal College of Art, UK (MA). He was raised in the United States, Germany, and South Korea. Gibson's artworks are in the permanent collections of many major art museums, including the

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the National Gallery of Canada, the Smithsonian Institute, and the Denver Art Museum. In 2013, he had solo exhibitions at The ICA Boston, National Academy Museum NYC, and the Rollins Museum. In 2017 he will participate in an international traveling exhibition originating at The Denver Museum of Art. Gibson teaches in the Studio Arts Program at Bard College and is a 2012 TED Foundation Fellow. He is represented by MARC STRAUS Gallery.

### **About MARC STRAUS Gallery**

MARC STRAUS, located at 299 Grand Street, is a contemporary art gallery that opened in 2011. The gallery specializes in discovering and fostering some of the best new international art talent, representing 16 artists from 10 countries most of whom are established but have not shown in the US before. The mission of discovering new artists and re-discovering recognized talent has established MARC STRAUS as one of New York's leading contemporary art galleries. The gallery continues to extend its program to a wider audience by regularly participating in fairs and biennials in the US as well as Europe and Asia.

### **Press contact:**

Dan Schwartz / Vyoma Venkataraman

Susan Grant Lewin Associates

212-947-4557

[dan@susangrandlewin.com](mailto:dan@susangrandlewin.com) / [vyoma@susangrandlewin.com](mailto:vyoma@susangrandlewin.com)

###