

# MARC STRAUS

## PRESS RELEASE

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## JONG OH

**January 10 – February 7, 2016**

Opening reception Sunday January 10, 4pm–6pm

New York, NY – Korean artist Jong Oh creates minimal sculptures that respond to the natural qualities of light and space of a site, and in the case of his third solo exhibition with MARC STRAUS Gallery, a light-filled two-story room. Tenuous strings and shards of Plexiglas are pulled into form by small stones or metal pendulums tied almost invisibly to the 21-foot high ceiling. These novel constructions retain the sense of solidity of walls and columns but the slightest of sways will reveal them to be illusionary drawings in air.

Oh's spatial arrangements suggest basic geometric shapes that are universally sensed thus elevating the natural beauty of spaces not usually observed: an ordinary corner, the area above a door or an arbitrary position of any wall. In the more domestic sized room, Oh expands his formal language to occupy the entire expanse, creating a new total environmental sculpture that requires the constant act of moving and looking. The longer one spends with these works, the more one's senses are heightened; not only is one made aware of the physicality and materiality of the elements, but also one's own physical boundaries.

Oh's constructions are of absolute honesty: they are deliberately left exposed, disclosing the assembly process. Composed of humble materials such as hand-painted string, delicate jewelry chains, tiny nails, stones, Plexiglas, slight metal rods and weights, and an occasional graphite line, every single object is pivotal to the overall composition and each is carefully considered for its intrinsic physical properties. Plexiglas shifts from invisibility to brilliant-opaque when catching light from a certain angle. White threads are colored in strategic lengths to "disappear"; metal rods and chains have a dull but unique luster. Two-dimensional printed images of water sometimes used contain the depth of an ocean at the hands of Oh. His structural haikus expound the complex interplay of gestures and spatial relations between its components, outlining immense balance and restraint.

While his works appear analytical and mathematical, Oh's process involves an equal amount of intuition and artistic experimentation. Such dichotomies exist throughout the work: simplicity and profundity,

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ambiguity and clarity, tension and freedom. In these altars of clarity and tranquility, Oh demands his viewers to slow down and focus on the neglected details.

Born in 1981 in Mauritania, Jong Oh earned a BFA from Hongik University in Seoul and an MFA from School of Visual Art in New York where he lives and works. In 2014–2015, he has had solo exhibitions at Galerie Krinzinger, Austria; Jochen Hempel, Leipzig; and MARSO, Mexico City. He has been in numerous group shows worldwide. In 2011, Oh was one of 12 graduate US artists selected in FIRST LOOK at the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art, Peekskill, NY. In 2014 he was the recipient of a major outdoor commission prize for a sculpture on the Hudson River waterfront in Peekskill, NY. Jong Oh is represented by MARC STRAUS, New York.

## **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.