

MARC STRAUS NEW YORK

STEREO LOVE SEATS HOT WHEELS

On View: June 6 – July 28, 2018
Opening Reception: Wednesday, June 6, 2018, 6pm–8pm



Joel Otterson, *Compact Disc Stereo Love Seats (Hot Wheels)*, 1988

MARC STRAUS is pleased to present **STEREO LOVE SEATS HOT WHEELS**, an exhibition focused on the seated object central to a work of art.

What is a chair? As prosaic as the query is, it has been the subject of contention for the greatest minds from Socrates to Wittgenstein. There is no archetypal chair, no Platonic form of 'chairness'. Yet we openly define any object to sit on as a 'chair'.

As a philosophical metaphor, the chair symbolizes authority and status. The word comes from the Old French *chaire* ("chair, throne"), thus from ancient Egyptian royalty to European kings, individuals of power are often seated high. Notice how heads of organizations are referred to as chairpersons?

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The sitting position implies a unique state — unlike standing with its relation to motion or lying with its relation to sleep— the chair signifies a rested disposition and a focusing of the mind. In his *“Seat of The Soul: Three Chairs”*, Arthur Danto asserts: *“...I am struck that it is the sitting position that is spontaneously invoked in the philosophy of mind when one speaks of the seat of the soul, or of intelligence, or of a wisdom or reason. Descartes spoke of the pineal gland, a mysterious organ suspended like the seat of Breuer’s Wassily chair midway between the cerebral hemisphere, as the seat of the thinking essence of man.”* In this context, the stone chair upon which Rodin’s Thinker perches is the essential bedrock to one of history’s most intense portrayals of contemplation.

Naturally, the seated object has been a subject of many artists. Consider Van Gogh’s rustic yellow chair, it is a personification of the artist. He painted a companion piece: Gauguin’s red armchair — all temperamental and fiery. These anticipated Marcel Duchamp’s readymade stool, *Bicycle Wheel* (1913). The more we look, we find seated objects appear in the greatest of paintings and sculptures, each time taking on new meanings and moods: Vermeer’s quiet, Cezanne’s uncertainty, Picasso’s lust, Warhol’s electric death.

The exhibition title **STEREO LOVE SEATS HOT WHEELS** is from the eponymous 1988 work by Joel Otterson, *Compact Disc Stereo Love Seats (Hot Wheels)*. One of many seminal sculptures in the show, *Compact Disc Stereo Love Seats (Hot Wheels)* consists of two sets of Victorian chairs cobbled together with seat coverings of Led Zeppelin. Both sets are plugged into a compact disc player that blasts rock music. The *Orientalist* (2007) is a bronze sculpture by the American-Pakistani artist Huma Bhabha. Regal, anachronistic, alien, the figure sits on a monumental throne as if a deity from another world. Folkert de Jong’s *Dust* (2004) sees a figure of Styrofoam and polyurethane foam with arms outstretched, defenseless and seemingly exhausted. His is a makeshift seat of ammo containers, fuel tins and cans — they heighten the sense of the futility of war.

Rona Pondick’s anthropomorphic *Chairman* (1990) is adorned with shoes. In *Bubble Wrapped Chair* (2018) Jeanne Silverthorne encases her actual studio chair of years with silicone rubber wrappings and duct tape, paying fealty not only to its utility but her time of labor in the studio.

Strange, protean and necessary, the seated object is and will always be in the canonical history of Man’s evolution.

Featuring the works of artists Mark Manders, Joel Otterson, Huma Bhabha, Red Grooms, Rona Pondick, Michael Brown, Sandra Tomboloni, Woody de Othello, Jeanne Silverthorne, Folkert de Jong, Paloma Weiss.

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For more information, visit www.marcstraus.com

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