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**The Hammer Museum Presents
Mark Bradford: Scorched Earth
On view June 20 – September 27, 2015**



(Los Angeles, CA)—The Hammer Museum presents *Mark Bradford: Scorched Earth*, the first solo museum exhibition of the artist Mark Bradford to be organized in Los Angeles. Comprising approximately 12 new paintings—including a major new work on the Hammer’s lobby wall—and a multimedia installation titled *Spiderman*, this new body of work refers to formative moments in the artist’s life and contemplates what the artist has called, the body in crisis. The exhibition brings together Bradford’s artistic practice, social activism and history as a native Angeleno. Curated by Connie Butler, chief curator, with Jamillah James, assistant curator, *Scorched Earth* will be on view at the Hammer Museum from **June 20 to September 27, 2015**.

“Despite his international acclaim, Mark Bradford has yet to have a solo museum exhibition here in his home town of Los Angeles, and we are thrilled to help make it happen,” said Ann Philbin, Director, Hammer Museum. “This exhibition situates Mark’s work within the political and social contexts that are fundamental to his practice.”

In *Scorched Earth*, Bradford uses his characteristic painting style, building up rich surfaces that map the terrain—political, emotional and actual—that he inhabits as an artist influenced by feminist and queer politics and as a social activist living in Los Angeles. Museum visitors will be greeted by a large-scale image of the United States map excavated from the lobby wall representing the percentage of the population living with AIDS per state, as of 2009. Bradford selected 2009 census data for the map, purposely using outdated statistics as a metaphor for how we receive but never really fully comprehend the massiveness of these kinds of numbers and information. Reflecting on the AIDS epidemic and the parallels with the recent Ebola crisis, Bradford is interested in the how the media obfuscates our understanding of crisis through disinformation and misrepresentation. Bradford is interested in imagining these abstract statistics and the historical distance and memory of the AIDS epidemic then, and how we think about the body in crisis at the current moment in history.

“The heavily worked surfaces and sprawling topography of Bradford’s new paintings for *Scorched Earth* can be understood as an extension of the artist’s interest in strategies of mapping and the psychogeography of the city he calls home,” commented Connie Butler, chief curator, Hammer

Museum. “Examining the moment and afterlife of the 1992 uprisings in Los Angeles, which he experienced from his studio in Leimert Park, Bradford has translated the outrage and lasting wounds of the riots into these new paintings.”

A second component of this exhibition, *Spiderman* is a multimedia installation, reimagining stand-up comedian Eddie Murphy’s searing commentary on sexuality in his controversial 1983 concert film, *Delirious*. Bradford’s early identification as an artist emerging in the mid-1980s was informed by queer and feminist politics during the developing AIDS crisis. With this work, he explores the deep cultural fears and misrepresentations that misconceive black identity and gender as one-dimensional, providing critique of pervasive cultural racism and homophobia in society as a whole.

Spanning a period of nearly fifteen years, Bradford’s work has been on view at the Hammer Museum in group exhibitions including *Snapshots: New Art from Los Angeles*, 2001 (toured to Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, Florida); *Mirror Image*, 2002 (toured to Center for Curatorial Studies Galleries, Bard College, New York); and *Eden’s Edge: Fifteen LA Artists*, 2007. The artist is represented in the museum’s collection by seven works that span lithographs, etchings, and large-scale mixed media and the years 2003-2012 in Bradford’s career. In October 2014, Bradford was honored with Joni Mitchell at the Hammer’s twelfth annual Gala in the Garden event.

The exhibition catalogue has been reimagined as a reader that contextualizes the artist’s practice more broadly, reestablishing Bradford’s studio-based production with the more political and social projects. The book includes a new essay by Connie Butler, past performance notes from the artist, reprints of key essays by Douglas Crimp, José Estaban Muñoz, Marlon Riggs, Hamza Walker, and others; a conversation with Bradford, A.L. Steiner and Wu Tsang; and a selected chronology by Jamillah James.

ABOUT MARK BRADFORD

Mark Bradford was born in 1961 in Los Angeles, California, where he lives and works. In 1997 Bradford graduated with a Bachelor’s of Fine Arts and Master’s of Fine Arts from the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, California. In 2015, Bradford was presented with the National Medal of the Arts. Earlier this year he was elected as a National Academician by the National Academy Museum and School of Fine Arts in New York. He is also a recipient of The McArthur Fellowship (2009); the Wexner Center Residency Award (2009) and the Bucksbaum Award, granted by The Whitney Museum of American Art (2006). Bradford has shown extensively in international and national exhibitions. Recent solo shows include The Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai (2015); The Rose Art Museum, Waltham MA (2014); a major touring exhibition presented at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus OH (2010), which travelled to Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston MA (2010); MCA Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago IL (2011) and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco CA (2012). Upcoming solo exhibitions include Hammer Museum, Los Angeles CA; Wadsworth Atheneum Museum, Connecticut CT and Gemeentemuseum den Haag, The Hague, Netherlands. Bradford has exhibited widely in numerous group presentations such as *America is Hard to See*, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York NY (2015); Sharjah Biennial 12: The past, the present, the possible, Sharjah, UAE (2015); *Variations: Conversations In and Around Abstract Painting*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles CA (2014); *Blues for Smoke*, Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus OH (2013); ROUNDTABLE: 9th Gwangju Biennale, Korea (2012); the 12th International Istanbul Biennial, Istanbul, Turkey (2011); and *Eden’s Edge: Fifteen L.A. Artists*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles CA (2007). Selected public collections include The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and Hammer Museum, Los Angeles.

CREDIT

Mark Bradford: Scorched Earth is organized by the Hammer Museum and curated by Connie Butler, chief curator, with Jamillah James, assistant curator.

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RELATED PROGRAMS**EXHIBITION TOURS**

Sunday, June 28, 2pm & 2:45pm

Chief curator **Connie Butler** leads two walkthroughs of *Mark Bradford: Scorched Earth*.

HAMMER LECTURES***The Promises and Perils of Postwar Black Los Angeles***

Wednesday, July 8, 7:30pm

In 1964, an Urban League survey ranked Los Angeles as the most desirable city for African Americans to live in. In 1965, the city burst into flames during one of the worst race riots in the nation's history. How the city came to such a pass — embodying both the best and worst of what urban America offered black migrants from the South — is the story told by **Dr. Josh Sides**, the Whitsett Professor of California History at California State University, Northridge. Sides offers a clear-eyed and compelling look at black struggles for equality in L.A.'s neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces from the Great Depression to the present.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**Libros Schimbros Book Club**

Sunday, July 26, 1-2:30pm

Inspired by *Mark Bradford: Scorched Earth* and the Hammer's partnership with Art + Practice, Libros Schimbros takes up Lynell George's *No Crystal Stair: African Americans in the City of Angels*, an arts-centric essay collection with sections about Leimert Park.

HAMMER CONVERSATIONS**Mark Bradford & Anita Hill**

Sunday, August 2, 2pm

Artist **Mark Bradford** and law professor **Anita Hill** discuss feminism as a gateway to activism and social justice, and their interdisciplinary methods for speaking truth to power. Bradford is a member of the National Academy, a 2009 MacArthur Fellow, and a 2015 recipient of the National Medal of the Arts. His new body of work touches on the 1992 Los Angeles riots, pervasive cultural racism, and homophobia. Equality and civil rights advocate Anita Hill is a professor of law, public policy, and women's studies at the Heller Graduate School of Policy and Management. She is the author of *Reimagining Equality: Stories of Gender, Race, and Finding Home* and *Speaking Truth to Power*.

HAMMER PANEL**Behind the Groove: From Soul Power & The Black Arts Movement to Post Hip-hop Aesthetics**

Tuesday, August 18, 7:30pm

Through film clips, TV snippets, and music samples, the critic **Ernest Hardy** and the writer **Tisa Bryant** explore the evolution of Black representation in popular culture, from issues of class, gender, and sexuality, to the way vocabularies of speech and the body shifted as the soul music soundtrack gave way to hip-hop's beats and grooves.

HAMMER SCREENINGS

Eddie Murphy: Delirious

Tuesday, August 4, 7:30pm

Mark Bradford cites this 1983 film as an influence for his multimedia installation *Spiderman*. In *Delirious*, a 22-year-old Eddie Murphy performs live, outrageous stand-up comedy that includes childhood memories of the ice cream man alongside virulent homophobic rants. (1983, Dir. B. Gowers, 80 min.)

Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992

Wednesday, August 12, 7:30pm

In Anna Deavere Smith's stunning work of documentary theater, the acclaimed actor/playwright portrays a multitude of real individuals who experienced the violent aftermath of the 1992 Rodney King trial. Using their words verbatim, she exposes and explores the devastating human impact of that event. (2000, Dir. M. Levin, 76 min.)

Friday

Wednesday, August 26, 7:30pm

Selected by Mark Bradford to illustrate how "The Hood" became commodified in American culture, *Friday* features Ice Cube and Chris Tucker as buddies trying to come up with \$200 they owe a local bully. A discussion with writers **Ernest Hardy** and **Tisa Bryant** follows the screening. (1995, Dir. F. G. Gray, 91 min.)

HAMMER KIDS

Close Encounters: Work It! Building Art from the Ground Up

Sunday, June 28, 11am-1pm

Art is more than just a few brushstrokes. A single painting can be made up of multiple surfaces that an artist builds over time. Join the artists Flora Kao and Leanne Lee in creating multilayered works of art inspired by the exhibition *Mark Bradford: Scorched Earth*. Designed for adults and kids ages 5 and up, these lively drop-in programs encourage families to look closely at art, experiment, and create together.

ABOUT THE HAMMER MUSEUM

The Hammer Museum at UCLA offers collections, exhibitions, and programs that span the classic to the contemporary in art, architecture, and design. The Hammer's international exhibition program focuses on wide-ranging thematic and monographic exhibitions, highlighting contemporary art since the 1960s and the work of emerging artists through Hammer Projects and the Hammer's biennial, *Made in L.A.* As a cultural center, the Hammer Museum offers nearly 300 free public programs a year, including lectures, readings, symposia, film screenings, and music performances at the Billy Wilder Theater which also houses the UCLA Film & Television Archive. The Hammer is home of the Armand Hammer Collection of American and European paintings, as well as the Armand Hammer Daumier and Contemporaries Collection and the Hammer Contemporary Collection. The Hammer Contemporary Collection focuses on art of all media since 1960 with an emphasis on works of the last ten years, works on paper, and art made in Los Angeles. The museum also houses the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts—comprising more than 45,000 prints, drawings, photographs, and artists' books from the Renaissance to the present—and oversees the Franklin D. Murphy Sculpture Garden at UCLA. Free admission to the Hammer Museum is made possible through the generosity of benefactors Erika J. Glazer and Brenda R. Potter.

HAMMER MUSEUM INFORMATION

Admission to all exhibitions and programs at the Hammer Museum is free and open to the public.

Visit www.hammer.ucla.edu for current exhibition and program information and call (310) 443-7041 for tours.

Hours: Tuesday–Friday 11a.m.–8 p.m., Saturday & Sunday 11a.m.–5 p.m. Closed Mondays and national holidays. The Hammer is located at 10899 Wilshire Boulevard in Westwood, Los Angeles. Parking is available onsite for \$3 (maximum 3 hours) or for a \$3 flat rate after 6 p.m.