

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

509 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011

The Haas Brothers: *Madonna*
September 12 – October 26, 2019

On September 12, Marianne Boesky Gallery will open its first solo exhibition of work by The Haas Brothers in New York City. The show, which is titled *Madonna*, will feature a new body of beaded sculptures, created at a wide range of scales, from the intimate to the monumental, as well as two large-scale sculptures made with Portuguese Pele de Tigre marble. The exhibition captures The Haas Brothers' increasing interest in exploring nature and spirituality as part of their deep commitment to material experimentation and traditional craft techniques, while also encapsulating their vision of collaborative artmaking. *Madonna* will be on view at the gallery's 509 W. 24th Street location through October 26, 2019. Marianne Boesky Gallery will also dedicate its Frieze London presentation in October to The Haas Brothers' ceramic *Accretions*, providing audiences with further access to the artists' dynamic practice.

Since founding The Haas Brothers in 2010, brothers Nikolai (Niki) and Simon have been guided by a vision of creative experimentation, spurning perceived artistic boundaries and embracing instead the limitlessness of imagination and innovation. Their general curiosity and appetite for risk-taking has led to the creation of an incredibly diverse body of work, from functional design to singular artworks and to the extraordinary world of undefinable objects that live in the liminal space between. Produced in materials that range from stone and porcelain to brass and bronze to self-invented resins and polyurethanes, The Haas Brothers' works are acclaimed for their distinct evocations of both abstract and figurative visual vocabularies as well as for the whimsical and generous spirit that pervades them.

As is now a signature of The Haas Brothers' presentations, *Madonna* will transport viewers into an otherworldly realm, where fantastical animals and odd hybrids reside. Here, colorful sculptures and objects that resemble futuristic creatures will be positioned among seemingly rare tropical plants, and connected into a cohesive environment through undulating platforms. The featured works capture the Brothers' wide-ranging artistic processes, from intricate beading techniques to monumental stonework to the incorporation of woven elements, and produce an incredibly tactile and evocative experience. The exhibition also highlights the Brothers' diverse collaborations, including with workshops in California, South Africa, and Portugal, and encapsulates their deep engagement and support for those working in traditionally understood craft.

The Haas Brothers were first introduced to beading in 2015, when they met a group of women artisans selling beadworks in a craft market in Cape Town, South Africa. The Brothers' were enamored with both the complexity of the technique and the incredible artistry in the women's work. Seizing the serendipity of the moment, the Brothers' established a collaboration with the artisans, which led to the development of the *Afreaks* series, a group of beaded creatures that were shown at the Cooper Hewitt's Design Triennial in 2016. Since then, The Haas Brothers' collaboration with the collective of women, who warmly go by The Haas Sisters, has grown and matured.

For *Madonna*, the collective will support the production of the featured beaded objects, guided by The Haas Brothers' preparatory drawings and using a selection of Murano glass beads produced in Venice between 1880 and 1980, which The Haas Brothers purchased after the factory became defunct. In addition, Simon Haas has developed a complex system that captures the expansive

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creative opportunities that beading allows and that provides a guide to learning the craft. This system has been articulated in *The Haas Brothers' Bead Book*, which has allowed Simon and Niki to teach the techniques to people local to the area of Lost Hills in Central California, establishing a workshop that offers work and pay in an area that lacks employment options. As part of their work with different communities and artisans, The Haas Brothers establish fair pay systems that include both economic support for the creation of works as well as in some instances profit sharing from sales.

"Part of the vision for our practice, and what we see as essential to the creation of art, is the establishment of communities. We are constantly asking how we can engage with others to achieve something new; something beautiful; something that excites or brings joy—that is really the importance and value of art and artmaking," said The Haas Brothers. "At the same time, we recognize the platform and voice that we have been given, and think it is critical that we use both to uplift and support others, especially women who have traditionally not been recognized for their craftwork and skills. We feel so lucky to have developed this relationship with The Haas Sisters, and to have the opportunity to shed light on their dedication and tremendous work, while also paying a fair and right wage for their contributions."

The beadwork in the exhibition will be augmented by several sculptures made with Portuguese *Pele de Tigre* marble. The Brothers first came to stone carving in their youth, learning from their father, artist Berthold Haas, and recently returned to the material, showing several large pieces at Marianne Boesky Gallery's Aspen location in June 2018. The solid, smooth, and monumental nature of the stone works provides a powerful counterpoint to the more delicate and finely detailed beadworks and highlights the range of The Haas Brother's practice. Here too, community proves an important element, as The Haas Brothers' engagement has helped spur the development of stone-carving as an economic engine at the quarry that they use. The anchor figure, the *Madonna*, within the upcoming exhibition combines the efforts and visions of the various communities with which the Brothers are involved—each lending to an aspect of its creation and making it a true embodiment of their collaborative vision.

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The Haas Brothers, twins Nikolai and Simon (b. 1984), founded their joint practice in Los Angeles in 2010 when architects Johnson Marklee offered them a chance to collaborate on a friend's project. The years since have seen them evolve from fabricators to acclaimed innovators, working across design, art, fashion, film, and music. The Haas Brothers' work has been presented in a wide range of museum and gallery presentations, including at the ArtScience Museum (Singapore), Mori Arts Center Gallery (Tokyo), and in *Beauty-Cooper Hewitt Design Triennial* at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum (New York). In fall 2018, they were recognized with their first solo museum presentation at the Bass Museum of Art in Miami, curated by Silvia Cubina. Their work is held in collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and Rhode Island School of Design Museum, among others. In 2019, they were the recipients of the Arison Award, given by the YoungArts Foundation. They live and work in Los Angeles.

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