

**Johnson Lowe Gallery Presents Navin Norling: *Dirty Legacy***

On view August 4 - September 9, 2023

**Atlanta, Georgia** Notorious public figures, artifacts of commercial advertising, heterogeneous fragments of cultural idioms, and proprietary nomenclatures serve as pivotal points of departure for Navin Norling's work. Spanning from 2004 to 2023, paintings, sculptural objects, and installations emblematic of Norling's practice compose the artist's first solo exhibition with Johnson Lowe Gallery, *Dirty Legacy*.

Norling's early adolescent experiences in suburban California, from his explorations across the Bay Area to summers spent on his grandfather's farm, continue to inform his decades-long practice of mining social detritus. His loyalty to urban grit, pop culture-isms, and the art of the streets — developed during his studies under the esteemed artist Raymond Saunders in California and further intensified through his subsequent entry into the New York art scene — intertwines with an appreciation for salvaged components. Cast-off wood and dilapidated windowpanes frequently make an appearance in the artist's oeuvre, exhibited by works such as *Good to the Last Drop* (2005) presented in "Make it Now," curated by Franklin Sirmans and Mary Cerruti at SculptureCenter in New York; *Black Cats* (2003), held in the contemporary art collection of the Brooklyn Museum; and *Blessed* (2022), previously exhibited at Anno Domini Gallery in San Jose, California.

Idioms like "Playa Hater," "Keep Off!," "Queen," and "Hard Times" spark individual narrative strands that traverse power, class, geography, mass media, capitalism, and inequality, blending graffiti's raw, playful aesthetics and rebellious history with traditional signage. Works such as *The Key Maker* and *Softline* vividly manifest such themes, utilizing a gestural fusion of soft tones and florescent chroma to create compositions and palettes which offer an invitation to delve further into Norling's abundant visual vocabulary. Mélanges of cacophonous iconographies developed from urban graffiti and pop imagery — Kabuki masks, Black Panthers, manipulated designer logos, and composite imagined figures like "Uncle Sambo" — function as an extension of his bricolage exploration, employing a stacking technique to unify and soften diverse, totemic fragments, thus forging an ambitious, cohesive genealogy of Americana.

This expression yields a resplendent aesthetic reminiscent of the tradition of quilting in the American South. Where the revolutionary quilts of the Gee's Bend mined the personal and communal in domestic tradition, Norling's remixed lexicon echoes and expands upon this language, forging a dialogue between mainstream ideologies and subcultural semiotics. This amalgamation of material culture provides a profound testament to the legacy inherited and grappled with by preceding, current, and forthcoming generations.

The works presented in Norling's Atlanta debut posit the artist's ceaseless inquiry into the confluence of cultures, defying the constraints of homogeneity and embracing the unequivocal truths of these fusions.

Navin Norling earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts from the California College of Arts. Norling later received his Master of Fine Arts at Hunter College in New York in 2002. Norling currently resides in Atlanta, Georgia, where he is a Professor at the Savannah College of Art and Design.

# JOHNSON LOWE GALLERY

## About Johnson Lowe Gallery

Johnson Lowe Gallery is devoted to championing emerging, mid-career, and established artists from diverse cultural backgrounds. The gallery's program is built upon a reverence for the alchemical nature of artistic expression, with the intention to honor the profound nature of visual language and the role it can play in affecting paradigm shifts at both personal and societal levels.

Johnson Lowe Gallery is committed to presenting work across all media, including but not limited to painting, sculpture, installation, and photography. Alongside a commitment to support and foster the Atlanta arts community, our curatorial and programming initiatives aim to facilitate cross-cultural and global dialogues.

The gallery was founded in the summer of 1989 in Atlanta, Georgia, by Bill Lowe. Longtime artists in the gallery program include Thornton Dial, Michael David, Todd Murphy, Jimmy O'Neal, and Kathleen Morris. The gallery's exhibition history includes internationally renowned artists such as Ida Applebroog, Markus Lupertz, Dale Chihuly, Hiro Yamagata, and Leiko Ikemura.

## Notes to Editors

Title: Navin Norling: *Dirty Legacy*

Dates: August 4, 2023 – September 9, 2023

## Address:

764 Miami Cir NE #210, Atlanta, GA 30324

## Hours:

Tuesday – Friday | 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM

Saturday | 11:00 AM – 5:30 PM

Sunday, Monday, and Evenings by appointment

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