

TRACY WILLIAMS, Ltd.
New York

JEFF LANDMAN
Working on a Building

16 JANUARY - 22 FEBRUARY 2014

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tracy Williams, Ltd. is pleased to present Jeff Landman's *Working on a Building* in his first solo exhibition at the gallery. Titled after an early gospel song praising building as a divine and restorative act, this exhibition resides between the physical and the spiritual. A major architectural installation, the gallery space will be comprised of interrelated spatial components, including columns, chairs, stools, a bed, and two tables, all originating from ruined timbers. Landman's craftsman-quality pieces encourage the viewer to look intently at his exquisitely rendered construction, while compelling us to become hyper-aware of our corporeal presence. One is simultaneously aroused by a sense of magnetism, reflection, and imagination. As in the gospel song, Landman constructs "a holy ghost building," a realm where physical experiences expand to become mystical and transcendent.

Landman's process is architectural; he began by creating scaled drawings of the gallery, as if for a construction site. As he dissected the geometries and proportions of the gallery plan, he conceived of a grid of columns, which served as the larger, foundational structure for the entire project. The process then became archeological, uncovering associations to the nave of a chapel or an ancient grove of sacred trees. Landman underwent an imaginative and

immersive process of unearthing a place or building that was abandoned- a site with tangible, yet uncharted history.

After discovering the massive severed timbers of a barn in Pennsylvania, Landman began carving out the columns. As the Egyptians and Romans measured using arms and hands, and Americans measure by feet, he created his own proportional rules, based on a thumb-sized unit of measurement. By way of division and subtraction, he deftly manipulated and reassembled the columns in order to create each furniture piece. Rather than adding material until the work appeared complete, Landman performed a process that he considers to be “the construction of a lightness, a special cleanliness.” Lastly, he finished the works off with a pure soap made of 100% vegetable fat, which cleans as it seals the wood.

Greatly inspired by Mesopotamian as well as Early Christian architectural practices, Landman is particularly captivated by how these cultures viewed building as a corporeal craft - a confluence of physical and spiritual knowledge. More modern influences can be attributed to the work of Joseph Hoffman, Carlo Scarpa, and Donald Judd. Embedded with structural logic and meticulous detail, Landman’s work seeks poetic structures that evoke a rare balance of sensuality and meditative distance.

Within this multisensory milieu, Landman hopes to evoke a sensation of trespassing, where visitors feel compelled to touch, sit, smell- interacting with the furniture, as well as the mysteriously uninhabited space. Landman states that, “in this way the gallery itself becomes part archaeological site, part construction site, where the visitor is engaged in an act of imaginative reconstruction.” He believes that a building, much like a sonnet or song, must be methodically proportioned, typologically cohesive, in order for the viewer to build meaning that is entirely their own.

Born in England in 1988, Jeff Landman is an artist, designer, and builder currently living and working in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. He graduated from Brown University in 2011. *Act Before You Speak*, a silent play he co-created, designed, and built, premiered at the Flea Theater, New York in 2012.

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