

Francis Cape

Here

Exhibition dates: October 15 – November 22, 2020

Reception for the artist: Thursday, October 15, 2020, 12-7 pm

Marinaro is pleased to present *Here*, Francis Cape's first exhibition with the gallery.

For the exhibition, Cape presents work stemming from a number of different series he has explored throughout his career, including themes of historical furniture making, their social implications and politics. Meticulously rendered, the works draw from different aspects of Cape's life and take on a semi autobiographical role as the viewer explores the exhibition in its entirety.

The earliest works in the show are from the *Trailer Boxes* series, which began in 2008 and Cape continues to work on currently. Each box is roughly the size of a pencil box and is uniquely based on a specific trailer home from the region where he lives. The works celebrate individual expression manifested in the personalization of manufactured homes by their occupants. The design of each box reflects that of the home in the photograph on the top of the box. In this series of works, Cape highlights variations and uniqueness in this weighted housing stock. Since visiting New Orleans, where Cape assisted in the post-Katrina rebuilding effort and saw many FEMA trailers in front of damaged homes, he has been interested in mobile homes and what they symbolize for those who live in them. Cape's 2010 project *The Other End of the Line* brought a mobile home from Narrowsburg to lower Manhattan to rest under the then newly opened High Line, where the structure hosted an exhibition of upstate artists curated by Ian Berry. A book, made in collaboration with the photographer Paul Kennedy, is being released in coordination with the opening of his exhibition, marking the tenth anniversary of the project.

The furniture in the exhibition extends from Cape's most recognizable bodies of work, where he appropriates historical architectural elements and furniture. *Community Chairs Model* takes its lineage from Cape's *Utopian Benches* (2011) project, where Cape built benches based on designs used by intentional communities, from nineteenth century American religious societies to contemporary secular communes. He made the benches in poplar, imparting a uniform look to the different designs, emphasizing the communities' commonality over their differences. The benches travelled to different locations where they were used to hold gatherings and discussions. Here Cape takes these concepts and applies them to chairs used by the different demographics who have settled in his town of Narrowsburg, NY. All of the chairs are rendered at half scale in white pine with designs that represent the people who used them—from the Appalachian craft revival, representing the early European settlers to a chair from the Luxton Lake Clubhouse that represents the African American community that summered upstate in the 1950s and 60s. Separated from their original context, the chairs can be compared by form, but their function remains the same, they become a metaphor for everyone having a place at the table and having an equal say.

In the *Narrowsburg Bridge Coffee Table Model* and *Ash Tree Table Model*, Cape takes the notion of identifiable regional furniture and makes his own genre. The curvature of the supports of the *Narrowsburg Bridge Coffee Table Model* is based off the precise angles of the Narrowsburg bridge. *Ash Tree Table Model* was created using the shape of the splits in branches from a tree

outside Cape's studio. The cabinets on the wall also use elements of the region to create a traditional housing fixture. The shape of Swamp Pond and the Ten Mile River become decorative elements on their fronts, and the color of their interiors is the actual color of these bodies of water.

The carved wood objects in the exhibition are perhaps the most personal. Cape perfectly renders a cuff bag from his volunteer EMT kit, a work glove, and a bandana in white pine, a wood grown in Cape's town. His love of landscape appears in carved rocks, perfect facsimiles in white pine of rocks gathered from his land, rendering his exterior landscape in a domestic scaled object for inside the home. In the newest work he painstakingly recreates fallen leaves from a lilac tree in memory of the recent passing of his mother and dog. Inspired by T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland*, "April is the cruelest month, breeding Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing Memory and desire, stirring Dull roots with spring rain," he transforms wood into ethereally light leaves that look like they could be blown away with a slight breeze.

Cape has long explored the material culture of furniture and homes as a window onto understanding ways of life. Through this exhibition he turns the examination on himself by selecting different parts of his own life in which to explore. From familial ties and his volunteer work in his community, to the landscape around his home and structures in his town, the exhibition becomes an anthropological study of his life.

Francis Cape was trained as a woodcarver before receiving his MFA from Goldsmiths College. His works have previously been exhibited at Prospect I, New Orleans; the St. Louis Art Museum; MOMA P.S.1; The Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art; Eli Marsh Gallery, Amherst College; Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH; Murray Guy, New York and Baltic 39, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. He lives and works in Narrowsburg, NY.