

BEN BROWN FINE ARTS



José Parlá in his studio, 2015. Photo: Jeff Goldberg / Esto

José Parlá **IMPRINT**

3 October – 9 November 2018

Private view: 2 October, 6-8pm

Ben Brown Fine Arts is delighted to present *IMPRINT*, the first solo exhibition with the gallery of New York based artist José Parlá. *IMPRINT* features a series of new large scale abstract paintings and sculptural pieces drawing on key and recurring themes in Parlá's practice including the urban space, human markings and calligraphy. The title refers to both the physical impressions left around the city by time and passers-by and the inspirations and experiences which imprint on our psyche.

Born in Miami to Cuban parents, Parlá spent his childhood in Puerto Rico before returning with his family to Miami in the 1980s, where he spent his teenage years taking part in the city's artistic counterculture street scene. Moving to New York in his early twenties, Parlá continued to look to the urban landscape for inspiration, further developing his individual abstractionist style. Central to this is Parlá's use of texture, a dense maze of paints and forms alluding to the

cityscape, and his signature calligraphic markings, evolved out of Subway Art and influenced by his travels to Cuba, the Middle East and Asia.

Composed of striking colours, shapes and textures, Parlá's paintings present a new visual reality, which explores the artist's fascination with culture, myth and language. Among the thick coats of acrylic, spray paints and pigmented powders one can find pieces of the city itself, comprising old posters, political slogans and debris worked into the very fabric of the canvases. The mood associated with particular locations and scenes is reflected in Parlá's choice of paints, private observations are conveyed in bold brushstrokes while personal narratives are transcribed in calligraphies. Each layer represents a memory now preserved, each line and shape charting an event of note.

In *IMPRINT* Parlá's life long dialogue with the urban subconscious, the tempo and flow of the streets, and musical and literary inspirations all come together in a celebration of colour and form. His artworks tell stories of immigrant roots, city wanderings and human encounters which reference personal histories while also leaving room for his viewers to find their own stories.

About the artist

José Parlá (b. 1973, Miami, USA) is a critically acclaimed, multidisciplinary artist working in painting, large scale murals, photography, video and sculpture. He started painting in the early 1980s, exhibiting his works in the streets of Miami, and studied at Miami Dade Community College, New World School of the Arts and Savannah College of Art & Design. Parlá's work has been exhibited at the High Museum of Art, Atlanta; SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah College of Art & Design, Savannah; Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase; National YoungArts Foundation, Miami; Van Every/Smith Galleries, Davidson College, Davidson; and the Havana Biennial, Havana, among others. Parlá's work is in several public collections including the British Museum, London; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; POLA Museum of Art, Hakone; and the National Museum of Fine Arts, Havana. Permanent Public Arts projects include a commission by ONE WORLD TRADE CENTER for his monumental mural painting, *ONE: Union of the Senses*, the largest painting of its kind in New York City, in the tallest building in the Western Hemisphere; Barclays Center, New York; Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York; André Balazs' Chiltern Firehouse, London; North Carolina State University's Hunt Library by SNØHETTA; and at Concord City Place, Toronto.

Ben Brown Fine Arts

Ben Brown Fine Arts opened its first location in the heart of Mayfair in 2004. The gallery has prominently positioned itself on the contemporary art scene with the representation of Ron Arad, Miquel Barceló, Tony Bevan, Yoan Capote, Rob & Nick Carter, Kitty Chou, Awol Erizku, Ori Gersht, Candida Hofer, Claude & Francois-Xavier Lalanne, Heinz Mack, Vik Muniz, Nabil Nahas, José Parlá, Ena Swansea, Djamel Tatah, Hank Willis Thomas, Gert & Uwe Tobias, Gavin Turk, Not Vital and Jan Worst. Also renowned for its strong expertise in 20th Century Italian Art, the gallery has been exhibiting the work of Lucio Fontana and Alighiero Boetti, amongst others, since its inception.

In 2009 the gallery took the first step in an international expansion with the opening of an exhibition space in Hong Kong. Brown's Hong Kong space was the first London gallery to open in the historic Pedder Building, offering a programme of western and international art exhibitions tailored to the Asian market. Since its establishment the Hong Kong gallery has hosted exhibitions of gallery artists as well as presenting historically significant exhibitions of important modern artists, most notably Pablo Picasso, Alighiero Boetti and Sean Scully. It participates in major art fairs worldwide.

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