

Gathering

5 Warwick Street, London W1B 5LU
www.gathering.london

Simeon Barclay

At Home, Everywhere and Nowhere

6 October - 11 November, 2023

Opening Reception: Thursday 5 October, 6-9 PM

Gathering, 5 Warwick Street, London W1B 5LU | Workplace, 50 Mortimer Street, London W1W 7RP



Gathering and Workplace are delighted to present *At Home, Everywhere and Nowhere*, an ambitious solo exhibition of large-scale sculpture, installation, and wall-based work by Simeon Barclay, collaboratively shown across both galleries. Each gallery will feature paintings from the same wall-based acrylic series, drawing an explicit continuity between the overlapping exhibitions. Set against a striking black background, cropped and edited film stills from Hedi Slimane's Celine Autumn/Winter 23 fashion campaign depict models projecting an effortless nonchalance behind sunglasses, a sight that both absorbed and repelled the artist due to their layer of impenetrability. To further explore this tension, Barclay has intervened into the surface with vinyl and painted canvas, creating colourful abstract blocks akin to the work of Matisse as a gesture towards deconstruction, fandom and appropriation.

At Gathering, Barclay is presenting a larger-than-life inflatable sculpture of the artist wearing a Donald Duck outfit, referencing a 1980 Elton John performance in New York City. Evolving from a previous sculpture exhibited at South London Gallery, which featured the same pop cultural citation, the newly created work takes on an overwhelming presence within the gallery, adopting a similar pompous scale akin to the 1995 Michael Jackson HIStory album statue, witnessed by Barclay floating down the River Thames, a stance that is simultaneously threatening and theatrical. Continuing to play with tensions between tautness and tenderness, additional works within the multifaceted installation interact with the architecture of the gallery's lower floor. The first of three sculptural installations, a series of javelins pierce the space, an object that is both graceful and contains a potential for violence. Taken by the artist and activist Ajamu X, a lightbox which depicts a nude portrait of the artist, holding a restful and unguarded pose harking back to classical statues, while a watchful cardboard cut-out of a police officer attached to a robot vacuum projects a pathetic sense of surveillance and failed deterrence.

At Workplace, a metal railing skirts around the darkened basement, where a series of neon text works held within semi-transparent bins illuminate the space. Visitors, kept at a slight remove by the barrier, can wander through the haunting atmosphere of the environment. A film installation projects handheld footage into the gallery to fill the space with emergency strobe lights, evoking an elusive sense of danger at night, whilst upstairs a fabricated weightlifting rack is adorned with strange and familiar sculptural elements, invoking the notion of strength as a defence mechanism. Here, Barclay's references to public architecture, institutions of control and tools for individual optimisation gestures towards the privatisation of urban space, where access

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to public areas is contingent upon private forces and reduces the agency of passers-by, often made indirectly visible due to the presence of sentinels and physical barriers. The silence of the film along with the ambiguity of the weightlifting rack further underscores this sense of what is stated and unstated, what is seen and unseen.

Across both exhibitions, made possible through a distinctly collegial partnership between the two galleries, Barclay draws upon a rich vein of pop cultural sources, producing works that manifest through a complex interplay of the sonic, collage, an archival approach to the appropriated image, sculpture, video, objects and the re-interpretation of the gallery space through installation. Deeply evocative and steeped in the politics of public space, within these dual exhibitions the artist brings visitors on a journey across the construction of masculinity and experiences of living in a contemporary city. Collectively, the artworks further Barclay's idiosyncratic engagement with art history and fashion, identity and histories of image making.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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Gathering
5 Warwick St, London W1B 5LU
Tuesday to Saturday 12pm - 6pm

www.gathering.london | Instagram: [@gathering.london](https://www.instagram.com/gathering.london)

About Gathering

Gathering is a contemporary art gallery designed by London-based architects Matheson Whiteley, showcasing an upcoming generation of emerging voices alongside established artists across its two exhibition spaces in the heart of Soho, London.

About Simeon Barclay

Simeon Barclay (b. Huddersfield, 1975) lives and works in West Yorkshire. Barclay received his BA from Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds in 2010 and an MFA from Goldsmiths College, London in 2014. In 2020 Barclay was selected to be included in the British Art Show 9. He has exhibited both nationally and internationally including at Southbank Centre, Tate Britain, South London Gallery, London; Liverpool Biennial, Liverpool; Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Workplace Foundation, Gateshead; Holden Gallery, Manchester; The Tetley, Leeds; Cubitt Gallery, London; The Bluecoat, Liverpool; Jerwood Space, London; Galerie Lisa Kandlhofer, Vienna; Rodolphe Janssen, Brussels; Arcadia Missa, New York and W139, Amsterdam. His work is in the Arts Council Collection, London; Zabludowicz Collection, London; Manchester Art Gallery and Whitworth Art Gallery collection, Manchester. Barclay is currently included in this year's Sculpture In The City, working on a major new commission for Deutsche Bank and will be taking part in this year's Chester Biennale.