

PAULA COOPER GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SAM DURANT

529 W 21st Street

May 19 – June 23, 2018

NEW YORK – Paula Cooper Gallery is pleased to announce a presentation of work by Sam Durant at our 529 West 21st Street vitrine gallery. The presentation includes a sculpture and works on paper from Durant's larger 2005 project, *Proposal for White and Indian Dead Monument Transpositions, Washington, D.C.*, which explores the violent history of settler colonialism and directly challenges the heroic myths that form the foundation of U.S. history. The presentation will be on view from May 19 through June 23, 2018.

On view is the sixty-two inch obelisk sculpture titled *The Acton Monument* (2005)—a replica of the extant U.S. monument by the same name—which Durant constructed in preparation for *Proposal for White and Indian Dead Monument Transpositions, Washington, D.C.*, first shown at Paula Cooper Gallery in 2005. Accompanying the sculpture are four graphite drawings from the exhibition depicting the monuments turned upside down. Viewers are invited to see this current presentation in the framework proposed by the accompanying 2005 exhibition catalog (available at the gallery and 192 Books) with essays by the artist and Native American historian Ward Churchill.

Re-contextualized in the gallery space and painted a uniform matte gray, the austere minimal *Acton* sculpture acts to remember the violence perpetrated upon native populations during the settlement of the Americas, and how the source of this violence has been misrepresented in traditional narratives of this nation's birth and in the historical markers that reiterate it physically in our landscape. Wiped bare and imposing in its physical presence, the monument's symbolic intention is called into question—exposing both the powerful white interests that drove these historical conflicts as well as the role of public monuments in shaping conceptions of the past.

The four drawings on view are inverted illustrations of U.S. monuments commemorating colonial massacres—the great majority of which, regrettably and unsurprisingly, honor white deaths. In identifying these markers, Durant proposes their transposition to the National Mall in Washington, D.C., a gesture that underscores and interrogates their traditional function: to validate and justify violence and loss of life through the commemoration of the victorious.

Durant's method of intertwining historical and cultural events of the past and the present is a recurring theme within his work. He has focused on such pivotal periods as the civil-rights era, the 1968 student riots, and the centuries-long struggle between Native Americans and white settlers.

Durant has been the subject of one-person exhibitions at the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, St. Louis (2015); Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles (2014); Museo d'arte contemporanea, Rome (2013); the Massachusetts College of Art, Boston (2006); the Kunstverein Düsseldorf (2003); the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2003); the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT (2002); and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (2002). Important group exhibitions include "The Natural Order of Things," at Museo Jumex, Mexico City (2016); "America is

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Hard to See” at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2015); “See You In The Hague,” at Stroom den Haag, The Hague (2013); and “Out of Place: Contemporary Art and the Architectural Uncanny” at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (2002). He has participated in the 2017 Yokohama Triennial, Japan; dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel; the 2004 Whitney Museum Biennial, New York; and the 2002 Venice Biennale, Italy. Durant has been awarded numerous public commissions such as the Waterloo Billboard Commission, Hayward Gallery (2017); “The Meeting House,” at Old Manse in Concord, MA (2016); and “Labyrinth,” Mural Arts Program, Philadelphia (2015). Durant lives and works in Los Angeles.

For more information and images, please contact the gallery:
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