

Blaffer Art Museum
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**Blaffer Art Museum Presents Solo Museum Exhibition of
Houston-Based Interdisciplinary Artists Nick Vaughan & Jake Margolin**
On view July 15—October 9, 2022

HOUSTON, TX | MAY 9, 2022 ---

Blaffer Art Museum is proud to present the first solo museum exhibition in Texas of artistic and life partners Nick Vaughan and Jake Margolin (working collaboratively as “Nick & Jake”), whose poignant interdisciplinary practice marries art, theatre, performance, archival research, and spoken word. As part of this select survey that spans multiple years of activity, the Blaffer will commission a precedent-setting number of new works by Nick & Jake that include two monumental drawings, intimate cartographic mappings of pioneering community members, and a pair of new performative lectures. The artists will also orchestrate a new performance-based “cloud” painting that will be presented at a campus-based location outside the museum, and a newly assembled compilation of their seminal video works will be displayed at the UH Student Center and Blaffer Art Museum social media channels. Within this multi-faceted and multi-site celebration, this constellation of new works will be integrated with a handful of past works to carefully trace the evolution and achievement of Nick & Jake’s practice. The exhibition will open on Friday, July 15 from 6:00pm–9:00pm.

Nick & Jake have spent the majority of their artistic lives mining the habitually marginalized and unheralded histories of LGBTQ communities across the United States, and how the legacies of elements found and forgotten affect the contemporary queer experience. Their primary body of work, *50 States*, is an ongoing, multi-decade series of installations and performances made in response to little-known pre-Stonewall queer histories from each state. This profound vocational endeavor engages critically with perceptions of history and identity as America’s views of sexuality evolve at an astonishing pace, while provoking deeply troubling social and legislative backlashes.

The Blaffer Art Museum exhibition centers on a new body of drawings that the artists refer to as “wind prints” in which imagery from their ambitious *50 States* project is stenciled in loose charcoal powder and subsequently blown away. “The remaining records of the images are,” in the poetic assessment of Nick

& Jake, “as ephemeral, delicate, and fragile as the hidden queer histories they are derived from.” The creation of this series marks the ten-year anniversary since the artists launched *50 States* and is quite notably their first body of work congregating their research in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, and Wyoming. By combining physical mass with material fragility, Nick & Jake believe they “have found the synthesis of forces that have defined our lives in our adopted hometown; the prints are literally of a scale unlike anything we could have imagined making before, but more so, they are spiritually expansive—holding all of the reverence we feel for these histories and all of the complexity and grace, grief and perseverance, holiness and grittiness, that we have come to see in these stories that collectively suggest the depth of our queer lineage in this country.”

The Blaffer exhibition will also include new works on paper drawn from oral histories recorded by the artists of queer community members who, like the artists, found their way to Houston from elsewhere in the country. These “Houston Migrations” propose a uniquely queered documentation of community narratives that were long kept intentionally secret, coded, and veiled. Together they constitute the beginning of an open-ended atlas that the artists will continue to build throughout their careers.

In conjunction with the exhibition, Nick & Jake will also orchestrate a pair of performative, multi-media artist lectures that map little-known LGBTQ histories by way of guest performers, spoken word, animated research, and audience participation. Building on the artists’ background in experimental theatre, these live events invigorate the typically staid format of the artist’s lecture and provide an inclusive platform for the artists to collaborate with community members.

This exhibition is organized for the Blaffer Art Museum by Steven Matijcio, Jane Dale Owen Director & Chief Curator.

Generous support for this exhibition is provided by Beverly McPhail & Kevin Kulish and Nancy Hixon.

Major annual funding is provided by Leslie & Brad Bucher, the Stolbun Family Foundation, and the John P. McGovern Foundation. Generous support is provided by Ingrid Arneberg, Andrew & Robin Schirrmeister, and Blaffer Art Museum Advisory Board members. The following donors sustain Blaffer Art Museum in perpetuity by giving through endowments: Cecil Amelia Blaffer von Furstenberg Endowment for Exhibitions and Programs, Jane Dale Owen Endowment in the Blaffer Art Museum, Jo and Jim Furr Exhibition Endowment in the Blaffer Art Museum, Sarah C. Morian Endowment, and the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation Blaffer Gallery Endowment. This project is supported in part by a grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts. The Blaffer Art Museum is funded in part by the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance.

For more information or to request high-resolution images, please contact infoblaffer@uh.edu.

About Blaffer Art Museum

Founded in 1973, the Blaffer Art Museum endeavors to further the understanding of contemporary art through exhibitions, publications, and public programs. As the gateway between the University of Houston's Central campus and the City of Houston, Blaffer Art Museum is a catalyst for creative innovation, experimentation, and scholarship. Its exhibitions and programs are free and open to the public, create community through dialogue and participation, and inspire an appreciation for the visual arts as a vital force in shaping contemporary culture.

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Visitor Information

120 Fine Arts Building
University of Houston
Houston, TX 77204

Museum Hours:
Tues-Fri, 10-5pm
Sat-Sun, 12-5pm

Admission is always free.

About Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts

The University of Houston's Kathrine G. McGovern College of the Arts is a premier institution for education, scholarship, and innovation in the arts, where every day we are cultivating the next generation of creative professionals and unlocking the potential of the arts to impact society and change the world. Our students are forging new frontiers and advancing the arts through academic excellence, innovative programming, and— together with our world renown faculty—ascending to the highest level of contemporary professional practice. Houston is a first choice for the arts. Houston is a city of culture and diversity, a quintessential arts destination, and a gateway to the international arts community. Steeped in the richness of diverse cultures, Houston and its engaging community network provide a citywide laboratory for research, education, and practice in the performing and visual arts.