

James Drake

Tongue-Cut Sparrows (Desire Is Not Enough)

September 8 – October 13, 2018

Reception for the Artist Saturday, September 8, 5-7 pm

Dancing on the sidewalk

She shaved her brow

And painted her lips black

Tongue-Cut Sparrows

Sign for me a poem

And let's kiss

Like we were really lovers

Moody Gallery is pleased to present *Tongue-Cut Sparrows (Desire Is Not Enough)*, an exhibition of charcoal drawings and prints by James Drake. This marks his sixth solo exhibition with the gallery since 2004 and will be on view September 8 - October 13, 2018. A reception for the artist will be held Saturday, September 8 from 5:00 to 7:00 pm with an Artist Talk at 5 pm. The exhibition is concurrent with *Walls Turned Sideways: Artists Confront the Justice System* curated by Risa Puleo, on view at the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, August 25, 2018 - January 6, 2019.

Both venues will show works from *Tongue-Cut Sparrows*, an extensive project by Drake that has resulted in powerful video installations, drawings, and prints. The video piece, *Tongue-Cut Sparrows (Inside Outside)* was featured at the 52nd International Venice Biennale in 2007, curated by Robert Storr, and has been shown at the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin in 2018 and the Station Museum of Art, Houston in 2010. The video and a multimedia installation have also been shown at DiverseWorks in 1995 and at ArtPace in 1998. These works are based on an invented sign language created by a group of women to communicate, from a distance, with their loved ones inside the El Paso County jail. A 24-panel charcoal drawing, which is part of this unique investigation about forms of communication, will be exhibited at Moody Gallery.

Drake states, "Each day men and women congregate on the streets below the jails in different cities throughout the world in an effort to communicate with their incarcerated friends and loved ones. They do not speak with words but have invented a simple and effective sign language using their arms and hands. Even though this form of communication is usually on a public street

it has a very private aspect to it and is ultimately more personal and immediate. As might be expected, most of the signing deals with family matters and local gossip; however, I asked if they could sign William Shakespeare, William Blake as well as contemporary writers, Cormac McCarthy, Benjamin Sáenz, and Jimmy Santiago Baca. Not only were they very receptive to the idea, but they were instrumental in choosing certain passages and works that exemplified their love and loss and desperate need to communicate.”

James Drake was born in Lubbock, Texas in 1946 and currently lives and works in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 1969 and Master of Fine Arts degree in 1970 from the Art Center College of Design, Los Angeles, California. Drake is the recipient of numerous awards, which include a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship and two National Endowment for the Arts Grants. His exhibition at Moody Gallery in 2004 received a U.S. Art Critics Association (AICA) Award for Best in Show in a Commercial Gallery Nationally, 2nd Place. Drake’s work can also be seen in the collections of many institutions including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Blanton Museum of Art, Dallas Museum of Art, San Antonio Museum of Art, Art Museum of South Texas, El Paso Museum of Art, New Orleans Museum of Art, New Mexico Museum of Art, The Lannan Foundation, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (La Jolla), Whitney Museum of American Art, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Corcoran Gallery of Art, and the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. In 2000 his work was featured in the Whitney Biennial.