

UNTITLED

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Henry Taylor
March Forth
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UNTITLED is ferocious to present a new solo show of work by Henry Taylor.

Remarkably prolific, Taylor began painting seriously at the California state hospital where he worked as a psychiatric nurse for ten years. While still in school, he developed a style that was both understated and nuanced and began working, more or less, compulsively, painting people he'd find on the street and becoming a fixture in downtown LA. Since then, his studio has had a fairly constant flow of friends, neighbors and strangers, all sitting for portraits.

For his show at the gallery, Henry will install an African hut, a large-scale sculpture built in part from the miscellany stashed in his studio and inspired by a recent trip to Ethiopia. The piece is a hodgepodge of random and found objects ranging from clusters of Chinese brooms, a disrobed mannequin, and a taxidermied hyena. Made in the same spontaneous spirit as his paintings, the hut is a kind of carefully curated randomness, both a departure and expansion of his style.

The exhibition highlights Henry's recent movement beyond canvases, building upon his "African Jungle" made of broom sticks, painted detergent bottles and old furniture (with a few paintings buried inside as well) first shown at LA's Blum & Poe gallery and currently on view at MoMA PS1, as part as the artist's mid-career retrospective. Above all, the new work is a strange social space (its main structure can fit about eight full-grown adults inside), a kind of extension of Henry's studio that speaks volumes about its creator. It is calculated chaos, simultaneously jarring and welcoming.

Henry Taylor (born 1958, Oxnard, CA, lives and works in Los Angeles) studied painting at California Institute of Arts. He was included in 30 Americans, a survey of the most important African American artists of the last three decades organized by the Rubell Family Collection and recently on view at the Corcoran Museum of Arts in Washington DC. He has had solo shows in LA at Sister, Blum & Poe and Mesler & Hug and, in New York, at Rental Gallery, the Studio Museum in Harlem and, most recently, MoMA PS1.