

Andrew Kreps
Gallery

22 Cortlandt Alley,
New York, NY 10013

Tue–Sat, 10 am–6 pm
andrewkreps.com

Tel. (212)741-8849
Fax. (212)741-8163

Raymond Saunders

40 Years: Paris/Oakland

May 1 - June 12, 2021

657 Howard Street, San Francisco, CA 94105

1275 Minnesota Street, San Francisco, CA 94107

Casemore Kirkeby and Andrew Kreps Gallery are pleased to announce *40 Years: Paris/Oakland*, an exhibition of works by Raymond Saunders, presented across two locations in San Francisco.

Since the 1960s, Raymond Saunders has developed a singular practice defined by an improvisational approach, as he culls eclectic ephemera, signage, detritus, and other materials from his daily life which reflect his living environment. A cult-like figure in the Bay Area art scene, Saunders' paintings and installation-based works are loaded with rich swaths of paint, interwoven with found materials and his own notational marks, and white-pencil drawings.

Blackboard surfaces, left visible through a heavy accumulation of marks and material, tie Saunders' works inextricably to his role as an educator, as he handwrites simple equations, lettering, and childlike notes onto the work's surface. Like jazz, dissonant at first, yet upon closer view, Saunders uses these diverse elements which seem to address the dualities present within life - plight and renewal, lack and abundance, innocence, and despair, as well as the individual and the community. Interweaving his own personal experience and anecdotes, Saunders aims to teach this full reality of the modern environment, the losses and victories, as well as the splendor that exists within the everyday.

Spanning four decades of Saunders' remarkable career, *40 Years: Paris/Oakland* spans two locations (657 Howard Street, and 1275 Minnesota Street) and features rarely-exhibited works on canvas from the 1980s and installation-based works from the 1990s. Focusing on his activities outside of the Bay Area, the exhibition highlights previously unexhibited works created in Saunders' Paris studio from the 1990s and 2000s, where he would spend each summer. Developed in close collaboration with the artist, the exhibition will additionally include recent works from Saunders' Oakland studio.

Raymond Saunders was born in 1934 and raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He obtained his BFA from the Carnegie Institute of Technology, before moving to Oakland, California, where he earned his MFA

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at the California College of Arts and Crafts. Saunders joined the faculty of California State University East Bay, Hayward, in 1968, eventually becoming an arts professor at California College of the Arts in Oakland, CA. Saunders currently holds the title of professor emeritus from Cal State East Bay in Hayward. In 1967, he published his seminal essay *Black is a Color*, which challenged the perceptions of identity-focused art. He was awarded a Rome Prize Fellowship in 1964, a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1976, and is a two-time recipient of National Endowment for the Arts Awards (1977, 1984). His work was recently included in the traveling exhibition *Soul of a Nation: Art in the Age of Black Power, 1963 – 1983*, organized by London's Tate Modern. He was also included in the traveling exhibition *Now Dig This!: Art and Black Los Angeles 1960 – 1980*, organized by the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. Saunders' works are included in the permanent collections of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, Howard University in Washington, DC, Walker Art Museum in Minneapolis, Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Los Angeles, Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, SFMOMA in San Francisco, Oakland Museum of California in Oakland, and the Berkeley Art Museum in Berkeley, among others.

40 Years: Paris/Oakland will open to the public on Saturday, May 1 at both of the exhibition's venues. Two limited-attendance receptions will be held with the artist in attendance: Saturday, May 1, at 657 Howard Street from noon to 5 PM, and Saturday, May 8, at 1275 Minnesota Street from noon to 5 PM. COVID-19 protocols, in accordance with the city of San Francisco's current guidelines, will be observed at both venues.