

# **SEARCHING AND LISTENING IN MY BACKYARD**

## **MELVINO GARRETTI**

### **March 11–April 15, 2023**

Parker Gallery is proud to present its second solo exhibition by Melvino Garretti, *Searching and Listening in My Backyard*. The exhibition features new paintings, assemblage pieces, ceramic sculptures, and works on paper.

The exhibition title points to Garretti's propensity for collecting and integrating the materials of life into his artwork. Having adopted the moniker of an "urban and suburban anthropologist," Garretti's art practice expresses the eco-system in which the works are made along with the enduring symbology of the human experience. Garretti inherited his collecting impulse from his family, who operated an antique store in their South Central Los Angeles neighborhood while Garretti was growing up. Garretti's newest works draw from his own trove, bringing together textiles, doll parts, furniture, beads and more into freestanding and wall-hanging paintings.

Garretti uses visual archetypes to parse through cultural histories and the inherent paradoxes of the lived experience. Visual motifs with dual meanings appear across these new paintings. A snake-like figure represents both the poisonous villain in the Garden of Eden as well as the serpent on a staff of the sacred Hippocratic Oath. The largest assemblage painting in the exhibition *A vision in my yard to find the crossroads, who and what's waiting* pulls together materials from the artist's own backyard—including wooden fence posts—and depicts the stray cats that have made a sanctuary there. Feral cats can be desperately viscous, and yet, painted in Garretti's electric style, they become part of the artist's pulsating, lyrical universe.

"My artwork is about my observation in my environment. The agony of being a human being is so profound it can cause me to get inside of a blue recycling can and start kicking and kicking and kicking to the other side of the road."— Melvino Garretti

**Melvino Garretti (b. 1946 in Los Angeles, CA) lives and works in Los Angeles, CA. Solo and two-person exhibitions include *Are We Moving and Listening?*, Taymour Grahne, London (2021); *Vino's Carnival of Ceramic Curiosities, or the Circuitous Path to Calamity*, Parker Gallery, Los Angeles (2021); *Space Versus Space*, Vernon Gardens, Vernon, CA (2018), *Melvino Garretti and Joe Ray: Aliens Were Astronauts*, PØST, Los Angeles, CA (2016), *Michael Frimkess and Melvino Garretti*, South Willard, Los Angeles, CA (2014) and Brockman Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (1984). Select group exhibitions include *Funk You Too!: Humor and Irreverence in Modern and Contemporary Ceramic Sculpture*, Museum of Art and Design, New York (2023); *HOT CONCRETE: LA to HK*, K11 Musea, Hong Kong (2022); *Clay Pop*, Jeffrey Deitch, New York (2021); *Sculpture from a Distance (Part III)*, Parker Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2020), *African American Artists in Los Angeles: Pathways 1966–89*, California African American Art Museum and Los Angeles Municipal Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2005), *Aesthetics of Graffiti*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA (1978) and *Process Results*, San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA (1976).**