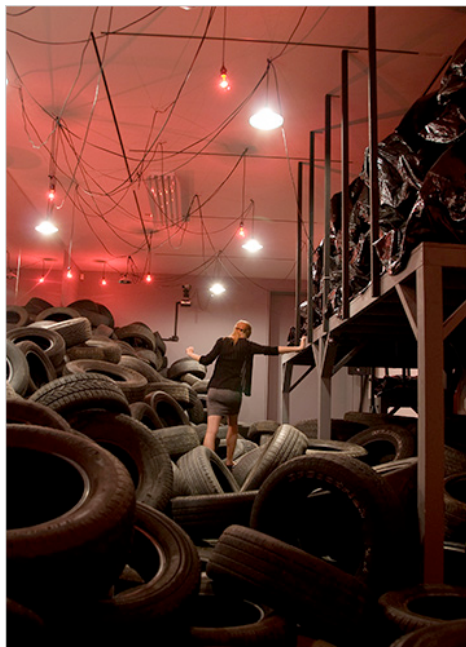


MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

Art in Review

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WILLIAM POPE.L



Hanna Heinrich/Hauser & Wirth

William Pope.L's "Yard (To Harrow), 1961/2009" is a re-imagining of Allan Kaprow's "Yard," a 1961 installation.

Yard (To Harrow), 1961/2009

Hauser & Wirth New York

32 East 69th Street

Manhattan

Through Oct. 24

In 1961, the artist Allan Kaprow, who coined the term happenings, created an installation in a small open-air courtyard behind the Martha Jackson Gallery at 32 East 69th Street. He wrapped several sculptures already there — a Giacometti and a Barbara Hepworth — in protective tar paper, then filled the space with

hundreds of old automobile tires, tossing them around to make piles that visitors were invited to climb.

The tossing was a homage to [Jackson Pollock](#), whom Kaprow considered a Dada performance artist. The climbing was a form of child's play, which Kaprow basically believed art to be. The tires, grungy and odiferous, embodied the merging of art and everyday life that was Kaprow's goal.

He called the piece "Yard," and it was a hit. In the decades between 1961 and his death in 2006, he recreated it often, changing it each time. The distinction he made between a re-creation and reconstitution was a wise one. A meticulously researched and restaged version of his famous 1959 piece "18 Happenings in 6 Parts" two years ago was a dud, lifeless. At a time when so much earlier performance and installation art is being revisited, it was a cautionary example of the hazards risked when the approach to the ephemeral is by the letter rather than by the spirit.

All such hazards are resolved in the latest iteration of "Yard," at Hauser & Wirth New York, a European gallery that has just moved into the old Martha Jackson space. The artist responsible, William Pope.L, has done something brilliant with it, faithful but new.

What was originally an open-air installation is now in an enclosed gallery. Mr. Pope.L has visually expanded it with a reflective wall covering but has also created a cavelike atmosphere by keeping the lighting dim and intermittent. Tires fill the room almost to the ceiling. A bank of rough wooden shelves is stacked with black plastic that seems to refer to Kaprow's wrapped sculptures, but the material is body bags filled with gooey substances meant to simulate decomposing flesh.

Visions of morgues and concentration camps are inescapable, as is the taped voice of a man reciting, in Obamaesque cadences, the words of a speech Mr. Pope.L has compiled from his own words and those of Kaprow, the novelist [Thomas Pynchon](#) and the filmmaker [David Cronenberg](#). The speaker begins with two commands: "Rearrange the tires. Have faith and wait." He continues with a crazy-quilt of references to Nazi torture, terrorist enclaves, happenings, dreams, the hills of Afghanistan. There's another command, "Rearrange your morals," after which he speaks, obliquely, of race and blackness, themes that Mr. Pope.L has addressed powerfully many times. The address ends in broken phrases, an inconclusive stutter.

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Kaprow's "Yard" never yielded ready explanations. Mr. Pope.L's doesn't either, though his is clearly a much darker vision. The phrase "to harrow" that he has added to the title conveys both the idea of a cultivation of soil and a descent into hell, apt glosses for art created in one traumatic century and assuming new life in another.

Along with a small documentary Kaprow survey upstairs at the East 69th Street space, Hauser & Wirth is presenting two other short-term updates on "Yard," one by Josiah McElheny at the [Queens Museum of Art](#), the other by Sharon Hayes at the New York Marble Cemetery, 41 1/2 Second Avenue, between Second and Third Streets, in the East Village, both on view through Sunday. Helen Molesworth, curator of contemporary art at the [Harvard University](#) Art Museums, organized the multipart event. She deserves our thanks. **HOLLAND COTTER**