



## THE ART NEWSPAPER

### **William Pope.L wants to bring down the house**

The artist's exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles could blow away the building



By Charlotte Burns  
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Left: William Pope.L, *Trinket*, 2008, in the Exhibition Hall of the Municipal Auditorium, Kansas City, Missouri. Photo: E.G. Shempf. Image courtesy of the artist.

The largest-ever museum presentation of work by William Pope.L could, quite literally, raise the roof. The centerpiece of the exhibition, *Trinket*, 2008, is a massive custom-made American flag—around 50 by 20 feet—which will be hung from a pole in the middle of the Geffen Contemporary gallery at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, and blown about by four industrial fans of such strength that the flag's ends will start to fray. The wind force is such that the building's ventilation system has been reconfigured to make sure the roof stays intact.

“My larger hope is that it will blow the roof off of those who come to see it,” the artist says. “The flag tends to live whole and primary in most minds—and in ideological manipulations of it—that this is so very important for my 'distortion' to work.”

Pope.L has been producing politically driven work for more than four decades and believes that art can re-ritualise our daily lives to reveal new things about them. He used to say he wanted to change the world, but he now thinks that corporations have co-opted the phrase, so he talks instead about social responsibility. The words may have shifted, but his focus has not: “The meanings of words change all the time. I believe the realities that constrict and disenfranchise lives are not so malleable.”

He is best known for his performance work, such as *Pull*, 2013, in which he created a city-wide performance piece, asking people for their help in pulling an eight-tonne truck through Cleveland in Ohio to demonstrate the power of shared labour.

In Los Angeles, locals will play their part too. The exhibition will include new and recent works, as well as “performance aspects and a reading room”, Pope.L says. “The community brings its own tone to things, and I am looking forward to the collaboration.”

William Pope.L: *Trinket*, 21 March-28 June 2015, the Geffen Contemporary at MOCA, Los Angeles