

VENUS MANHATTAN

Joseph Elmer Yoakum

Art Basel Miami Beach

Booth S16

December 4 - 8, 2019

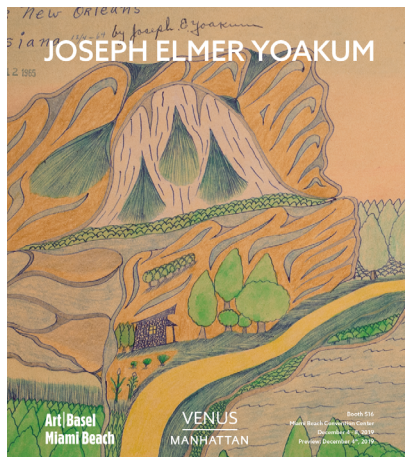
Preview: Wednesday, December 4th, 2019

Venus Over Manhattan

980 Madison Avenue

New York, NY 10075

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



(Miami, FL) – For the 2019 edition of **Art Basel Miami Beach, Venus Over Manhattan** is pleased to present an exhibition of important and historic works by **Joseph Elmer Yoakum**, the visionary American artist whose densely patterned landscapes earned him a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1972. Following the gallery’s major presentation of Yoakum’s work earlier this year, which garnered reviews from the *New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, and *The New Yorker*, among other major publications, the presentation will comprise a group of nearly twenty works on paper, some of which have never before been exhibited. The exhibition will be on view from December 4th through 8th, 2019, at **Booth S16** at the **Miami Beach Convention Center**.

An artist of African American and Native American descent, Joseph Elmer Yoakum made drawings that describe a life spent traveling, first with the circus as a young man, then with the army during World War I, and later, alone hopping train cars in the American West—all before settling in Chicago, where he committed to a life of art making around 1962. A set of competing narratives seeks to account for the details of his life: per official documentation, Joseph Elmer Yoakum was born to John Yokum (a previous spelling of the family name) and Frances Wadlow on February 20th, 1890, in Ash Grove, Missouri. But according to Yoakum, he was born in 1888, “near the village of Window Rock, Arizona in the Southwest territory before it were [sic] made the Navajo and Apache Indian reservation. He often claimed Navajo heritage, referring to himself as “Na-va-JOE,” but his Native American heritage can rather be traced to the Cherokee Nation, through both of his parents. Many aspects of his biography remain similarly uncertain—such as his time spent traveling with the Ringling Brothers Circus, or his role as a bill-poster for Buffalo Bill Cody’s Wild West Show—and contribute to a picture of his life that shuttles between myth and fact.



Foot of Mountain Range Near Madrid Spain, c. 1963-1964



Dead Sea near Dhoian in Jordan So East Asia, c. 1970

Yoakum dedicated his life to making art around 1962, at the age of 72, while living in a converted storefront on Chicago’s South Side. It was here that he developed his mature style: characterized by a densely patterned and radically flattened approach, Yoakum’s drawings often feature brightly colored geographies, gently moving streams, and complex layers of receding trees. Yoakum claimed to have traveled to each of the locations he drew, and though many expressed doubts about the truth of his claims, one of the artist’s biographers, Derrel B. DePasse, found that Yoakum

VENUS

MANHATTAN

Joseph Elmer Yoakum

Art Basel Miami Beach

Booth S16

December 4 - 8, 2019

Preview: Wednesday, December 4th, 2019

Venus Over Manhattan

980 Madison Avenue

New York, NY 10075

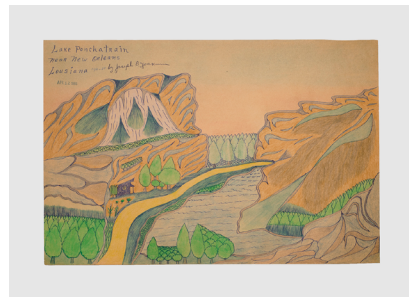


Mt. Wilhelemina of Nassau Range Near Carstenez New Guinea asia [sic], c. 1970s

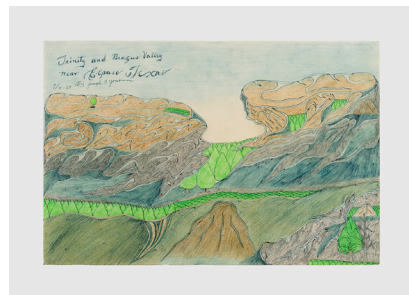
had indeed visited many of the places his drawings depict. With the support of John Hoppgood and Whitney Halstead, a professor of Art History at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Yoakum began exhibiting his work in the late 1960s. Halstead's students at the time were a group of artists who came to be known as the Chicago Imagists, and included Roger Brown, Gladys Nilsson, Jim Nutt, Ed Paschke, and Christina Ramberg, many of whom championed, collected, and drew inspiration from Yoakum's work. Indeed as Roger Brown described, finding Yoakum "was like finding [Henri] Rousseau in our own backyard." Yoakum's success ballooned from there, culminating in a major solo presentation at the Whitney Museum of American Art, organized by Marcia Tucker, which opened just a month before Yoakum died.

ABOUT JOSEPH ELMER YOAKUM

Joseph Elmer Yoakum was, according to official record, born in Ash Grove, Missouri, in 1890. His work has been the subject of numerous solo presentations, including exhibitions at the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago; Intuit: The Center for Intuitive and Outsider Art, Chicago; the Art Institute of Chicago; and the Whitney Museum of American Art. Yoakum's work is frequently feature in major group exhibitions, including recent presentations at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, University of California, Davis; the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia. His work is held in numerous public collections, including the Art Institute of Chicago; the Menil Collection, Houston, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Joseph Elmer Yoakum lived and worked in Chicago until his death in 1972.



Lake Ponchatrain Near New Orleans Louisiana, 1965



Trinity and Brazus Valley near Elpaso Texas, 1964

For further information about the exhibition and availability, please contact the gallery at info@venusovermanhattan.com

For all press inquiries related to the exhibition, please email press@venusovermanhattan.com