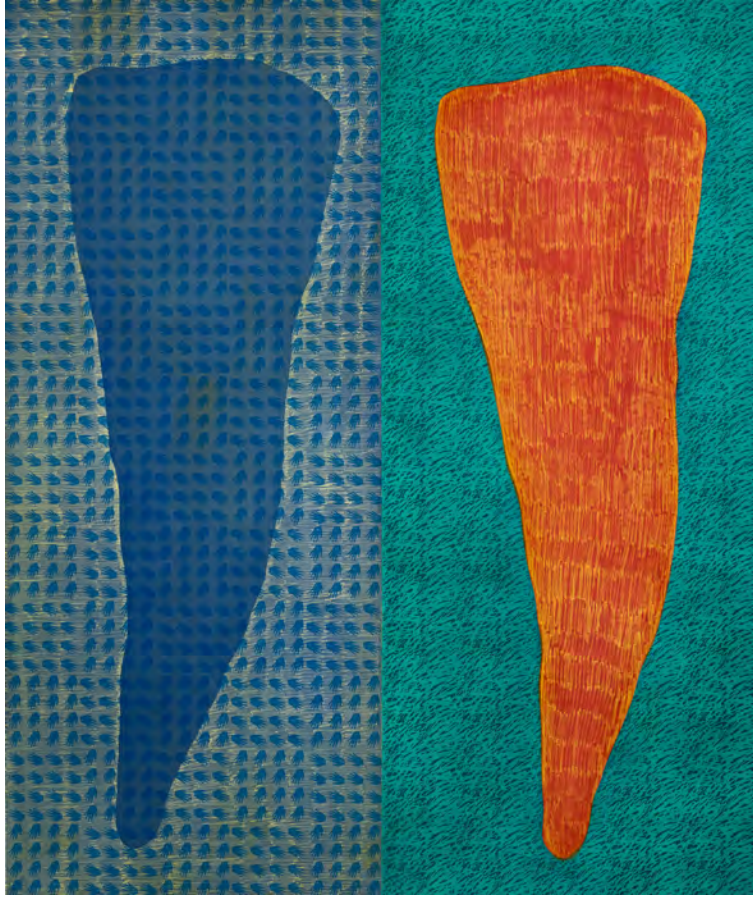




Under: Ground: 2 and Under: Ground: 3, 2026
Color aquatint and spitbite aquatint
Paper Size: 44" x 54"; Image Size: 40" x 48"
Edition of 20

We are pleased to announce our seventh project with Chicago based painter McArthur Binion. In his latest series titled *Under:Ground*, Binion continues to explore agrarian themes inspired by his childhood spent on a farm in the South. His large depictions of root vegetables are juxtaposed with grid marks that are made with a repetitive, task-based approach that speaks to his personal history of manual labor in the cotton fields of Mississippi. His use of the grid becomes reminiscent of plots of land, and the tiled images of his hand reinforce these same themes.

Binion brings a Southern, Black mentality to Minimalism and pushes past the limitations of the genre. "These everyday roots, according to Binion, relate to lineage, grounding, and the foundational elements of memory. As a Black child in the segregated South, Binion experienced a world where Black life was structurally pushed 'underground'—socially constrained, politically suppressed, and rarely acknowledged in official narratives."¹

The work evokes the Black American connection to the land and farming as formerly enslaved laborers and sharecroppers in the South. After the Civil War, during early Reconstruction, General Tecumseh Sherman issued Special Field Order No.15 that had been approved by President Lincoln. This order set aside more than 400,000 acres of coastal land confiscated from Confederate land owners with the intention of redistributing it to

the thousands of formerly enslaved. The policy stated that each family would be issued 40 acres and a mule. Prior to issuing the order, General Sherman and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton met with 20 Black ministers, each of them leaders in their respective communities in order to discuss what they and their communities wanted after the war. The answer was land. They wanted their own land where they could build a foundation both physically and economically for themselves. By June of 1865, as many as 40,000 formerly enslaved families received their plot of land along the Southeastern coastline. Sadly, the assassination of Lincoln upended everything, including this policy. Lincoln's successor and Southern sympathizer Andrew Johnson issued a pardon to any Southern citizen who pledged their allegiance to the United States. Included in this pardon was the return of any confiscated land. Of the 40,000 formerly enslaved families, only about 2,000 were able to hold onto their land. Others were forced into sharecropping.

In yet his most narrative body of work, Binion's *Under:Ground*: prints and paintings engage with the long histories of struggle and survival and bring to mind the 1930 painting, *American Gothic*, by Grant Wood as well as the photograph of the same title, shot by Gordon Parks in 1942. Wood was paying tribute to what he imagined to be rural American values and strengths. Parks' photo is an ironic critique of those supposed American



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values, pointing to the bitter realities of segregation and poverty. While Binion contends with this history, the tone and intimacy of his work continues to lean toward the triumphant.

This harkens to the life and work of celebrated chef, Edna Lewis. In 1916, Lewis was born in Freetown, VA, which was literally a community of freed, formerly enslaved people and their descendants. Lewis is perhaps the most renowned American chef from the South and is often called the “Grande Dame of Southern cooking.” She helped shape the world’s understanding of Southern and African American cuisines and was an early pioneer of the farm-to-table movement, greatly influencing many, including the legendary Alice Waters.

Remarkably, when McArthur comes to Berkeley to work at our press, he is sure to make a reservation at the famed Chez Panisse. He has admired Alice and the restaurant since the 70s and prioritizes farm fresh produce and quality dishes. Binion has often mentioned that he packed beautiful lunches for his children while they were growing up. He loves to cook and talk about food, nourishment, sustenance—and of course art!

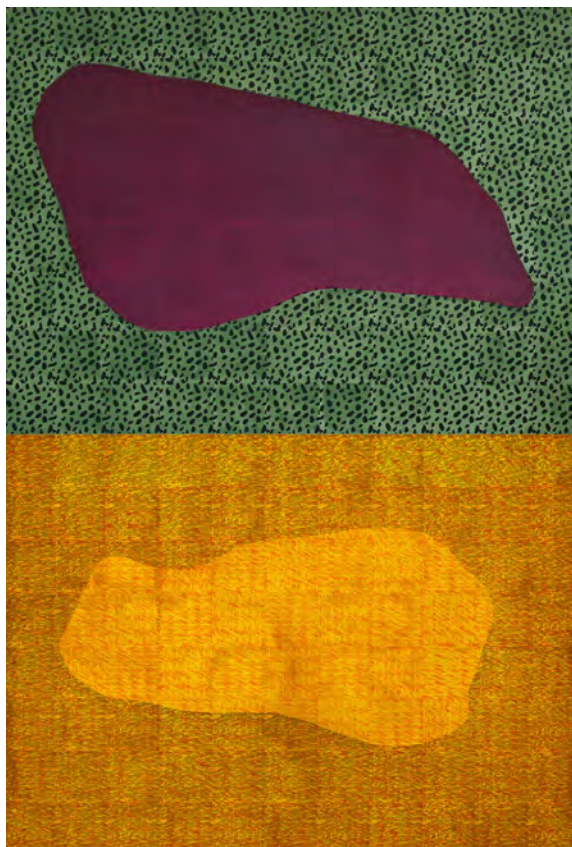
-Rhea Fontaine

I work an hour and a half. I take a short break. I eat very little food. I've got some nuts and fruit. But when I'm working really hard, there's a beautiful garden, and I take breaks there about every two hours for about 15 minutes. I'm in the birds and fruit trees and everything. It's beautiful. And I go back to work. And that's my routine, and it's my joy.

- McArthur Binion 2016

Given the discussion of land ownership in the piece, I'd like to acknowledge the Indigenous land that all Americans occupy. Paulson Fontaine Press sits on the ancestral, unceded territory of the Chochoeny-speaking Ohlone people.

1 "Stuttering:Standing:Still II," Lehmann Maupin, 2026



Under: Ground: 1, 2026
Color aquatint and spitbite aquatint.
Paper Size & Image Size: 44" x 64"
Edition of 20