



“The most important imperative to be questioned is the one that tells you to go the art supply store to be a painter.”

MARK BRADFORD

Mark Bradford

Kingdom Day, 2010

Mixed media collage on canvas

Four panels, each 120 x 120 inches

Collection of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Museum purchase

Acquired in 2011

© Mark Bradford

Mark Bradford's work occupies a hybrid space in art—it is painting, collage, and sculpture all at once. Resembling an aerial view of the artist's native Southern California, *Kingdom Day* features a tangled web of lines and fissures, weighted at the bottom by a smooth, shiny expanse of silver foil. Visual elements such as line, texture, space, and color connect to the viewer on multiple levels; one can appreciate the balance of positive to negative space that the lower register of the painting generously affords, while also connecting Bradford's use of collage and décollage to the relentless cycle of building and destruction that occurs in urban areas. The intricate network of lines that make up the bulk of the composition is created by intensive layering of paper, caulk, and incisions that can also reference the informal economies that spring to life in the dense geography of a big city. Scavenging multicolored paper from billboards and handmade merchant signs in his neighborhood of South Central, Bradford layers and arranges this material to create heavily textured two-dimensional works. These materials are pulled from the world around him, and the artist appreciates that they have had a previous function—they have lived a life.

Referencing an event that Bradford recollects with clarity, *Kingdom Day* refers to the annual Los Angeles parade of the same name that honors the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. *Kingdom Day* relates specifically to the 1992 parade, as this was a watershed year for the community. In this twelve-month span, a Korean-born parade grand master was appointed—a sign of mending racial relations within the neighborhood—while at the same time, riots exploded across the city in response to the acquittal of four policemen accused of beating Rodney King, Jr.—a clear symptom of a community unraveling. By appropriating and recontextualizing a billboard advertisement for the parade—incorporating text, images of human faces, and abstract elements—Bradford weaves the complex realities of a multiethnic community into a colorful, abstracted, map-like composition.