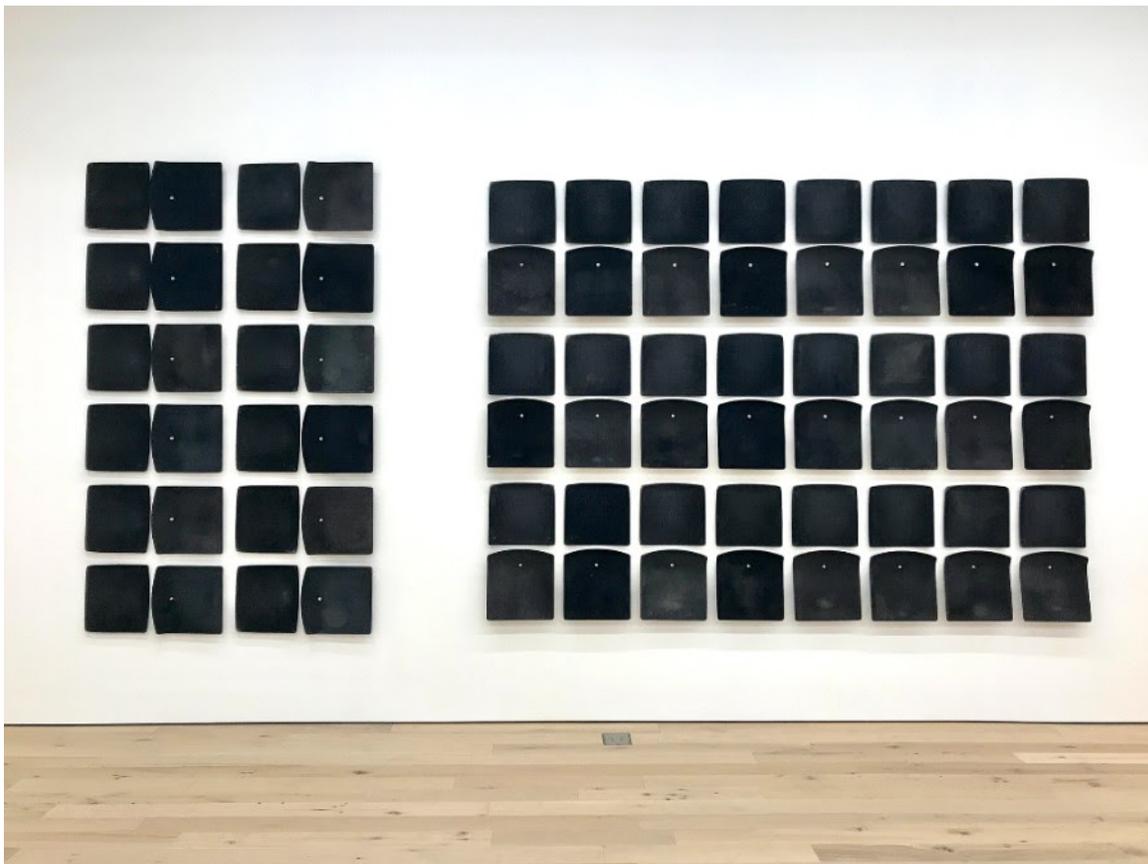


MARTOS GALLERY

“Invisible Man at Martos Gallery,” *Exhibitionary*, May, 2017



Invisible Man at Martos Gallery



Courtesy Martos Gallery, New York

For the grand opening of their new location [Martos Gallery](#) is mounting a group show curated by the recently appointed gallery director, the brilliant Ebony L. Haynes who we deeply respect. The show is titled after one of the most

significant American literary works, *Invisible Man*. It is said to be among the clearest pictures of America in any novel of the 20th century, other people want to reduce it to a 'race novel.' Here Martos Gallery opens with four artists bringing forward the minimalist discourse – with reduced materials. It is not an exhibition of identity politics despite the fact that all artists are people of color. It is instead a meditation on the political radicality of bodies. In **Jessica Vaughn's** large scale wall installation (recalling minimalist master Charlotte Posenenske who has two wonderful shows in Berlin right now) she mounts 36 decommissioned dark navy blue seats taken from the Chicago public subway, the so called 'Blue Line,' which serves the city's nearly all African-American south-side. On the wall they immediately appear black, giving the whole exhibition a sense that it only uses the colors black and white. When we get closer we see the blues. The fabric is worn, tattered and rubbed by the bodies that sat on the seats – the ghost of these bodies still very present. Similarly, **Kayode Ojo** gives us another object for sitting on, one of the most humorous works with biting irony in the show. Standing a 'dark chocolate' colored couch from a high-end furniture store on its end he tops it off, nearly out of site, with a silver sequined "evening prom maxi cocktail dress" – it made us laugh out loud, but gendered implications broke our heart. As Michelle Kuo, editor in chief of Artforum wrote "the ways in which bodies become visible, palpable, distributed, mediated... Today, when so many are being banned – and subject to violence the world over – the most powerful thing a body can do might be to declare its opacity." The central work of the exhibition is a water glass by **Pope.L** filled nearly to the top (with exactly one half inch of the glass empty). It is a metaphor for prohibition of segregation laws preventing 'colored' people from drinking at 'Whites only' water fountains. These are the American phantasmagoria we still live with.

[Martos Gallery](#), 41 Elizabeth Street, New York, NY 10013