

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

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David Ebony's Top 10 New York Gallery Shows for November

David Ebony, Friday, November 21, 2014



Martin Puryear, *Big Phrygian* (2010–2014).
Courtesy of Matthew Marks.

2.) Martin Puryear at Matthew Marks, through January 10, 2015

Martin Puryear's illustrious career, spanning some four decades, is full of honors, accolades and recognition for his outstanding achievement in sculpture. Yet he still seems hungry—tirelessly reaching for perfection, as evidenced by this energetic show of major new abstract works in wood, bronze, cast iron and stainless steel. He revisits certain forms, including those referencing African art, and the Phrygian cap or “liberty cap,” which he uses metaphorically as an emblem for the struggle for freedom. A major example of the form here, *Big Phrygian* (2010-2014), a large, curvilinear object made of red-painted red cedar, is among the best he has ever done. In *Faux Vitrine* (2014), he introduces a new form, almost furniture-like in its allusion to functionality. Made of stained maple and walnut, with polished stainless steel panels, this towering elliptical construction resembles a teetering bookshelf, although it also has an almost architectural feel, like a bowed skyscraper. The works in this show are by a master craftsman and consummate artist at the height of his evocative powers.