

For more than thirty years, the Los Angeles–based artist Henry Taylor (b.1958) has portrayed people from widely different backgrounds—family members, friends, neighbors, celebrities, politicians, and strangers—with a mixture of raw immediacy and tenderness. His improvisational approach to artmaking is hinted at in this exhibition’s title, *B Side*, which refers to the side of a record album that often contains lesser-known, more experimental songs.

Taylor’s paintings, executed quickly and instinctually from memory, newspaper clippings, snapshots, and in-person sittings, are variously light-hearted, intimate, and somber. In them, he combines flat planes of bold, sensuous color with areas of rich, intimate detail and loose brushstrokes to create paintings that feel alive. Guided by a deep-seated empathy for people and their lived experiences, Taylor captures the humanity, social milieu, and mood of his subjects, whose visceral presence is heightened by their closely cropped, often life-size images. In working from personal experience and shared history, Taylor offers a view of everyday life in the United States that is grounded in the experiences of his own community, including the incarceration, poverty, and often deadly interactions with police that disproportionately affect Black Americans. Deeply steeped in art history, his work forms a continuum with the expressive figurative painting and politically engaged work of European and American artists from Max Beckmann to Bob Thompson, Philip Guston, and Alice Neel.

Born in the Los Angeles suburb of Ventura, California, Taylor grew up nearby in Oxnard. While studying art at Oxnard Community College and later the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), he worked at the Camarillo State Mental Hospital as a psychiatric technician on the night shift. After graduating from CalArts in 1995 and moving to downtown Los Angeles, Taylor became a mainstay of the burgeoning art community there and a leading influence on the rise of figurative painting.

Organized thematically, *Henry Taylor: B Side* presents the artist’s paintings along with a selection of his assemblage sculptures, rarely exhibited early drawings, a large grouping of painted objects on recycled cigarette packs and other everyday supports, and two new installations, one made specifically for this exhibition.



Hear from the artist  
and others—and find  
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500 Introduction

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This exhibition is sponsored by



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