



48 WALKER ST & 291 GRAND ST | SEPT 17 - OCT 17, 2020

Trenton Doyle Hancock *Something American*

James Cohan is pleased to present *Something American*, an exhibition of new work by Trenton Doyle Hancock, on view from September 17 to October 17 at 48 Walker Street and 291 Grand Street. The exhibition will span both of the gallery's locations, with new paintings in Tribeca and a presentation of the second chapter of Hancock's ongoing graphic novel in the Lower East Side. This is the artist's seventh solo exhibition at James Cohan.

At James Cohan's Grand Street gallery, Trenton Doyle Hancock will present a new suite of ink-on-paper works that comprise the second chapter of the artist's most visionary drawing project to date: *Trenton Doyle Hancock Presents The Moundverse*. Designed as a traditional graphic novel, the intricate black and white illustrations provide a narrative master class in the characters and mythologies that have ruled Hancock's work for the past twenty-five years.

The overarching narrative of his graphic novel places Hancock's heroes and villains into a setting where he can speak about Americanism. Central to this chapter are Vegans, Policemen, and the artist's own alter ego Torpedo Boy. The conflict between these characters becomes a vehicle for examining the extremism and idealism that often seem inherent to American identity and cultural expression, while looking closely at the ever-evolving, attendant structures of white supremacy. At the same time, the work becomes a way to talk back to the world at large and define the primary players and structures of Hancock's singular Moundverse.

In this chapter, which unfolds as if a fever dream, we follow first the artist—and then his superhero doppelganger Torpedo Boy—on a rollicking and revelatory journey. Dust-ups with Vegans (both human and ossiform), meat feasts at food trucks, jaunts through past lives, and encounters with bumbling policemen ensue.

This is the first time police characters have appeared in the graphic novel or in Hancock's iconography. As Hancock notes, "it's been a lot of fun to turn them into ineffectual buffoons. In the story, you have some kind of power over them, and you can act on it." Throughout the arc of the chapter, power and corruption is volleyed from character to character, page by page. The police, who ostensibly have authority, are easily corrupted by the Vegans and become a vehicle for the abuse of power that enables the theft of Tofu.

On a fundamental level, this chapter explores the mechanisms of seeing—and the ways in which our sight fails us and leads us astray. The human vegans are unable to see their ossiform namesakes, the police mistake the Vegans for kindergarteners, and the proprietor of the health food emporium warmly welcomes the zombie cops who immediately plunder his establishment. Appearances can be deceiving, and truth can only be revealed through close looking and a questioning of what at first glance seems obvious. Art becomes itself a strategy of seeing—of looking at the world and laying bare its honest, ugly corners—while also finding beauty and humor.

Trenton Doyle Hancock was born in 1974 in Oklahoma City, OK. Hancock was featured in the 2000 and 2002 Whitney Biennial exhibitions, at the time becoming one of the youngest artists in history to participate in the prestigious survey. In 2014, his retrospective, *Skin & Bones: 20 Years of Drawing*, at the Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston traveled to Akron Art Museum, OH; Studio Museum in Harlem, NY; and Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, VA. In 2019, a major exhibition of his work, *Mind of the Mound: Critical Mass*, opened at MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at institutions including Locust Projects, Miami, FL; Temple Contemporary, Philadelphia, PA; Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, MO; Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, FL; Weatherspoon Museum, Greensboro, NC; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, TX; Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, FL; Institute for Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA; Olympic Sculpture Park at the Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA; Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh; and Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Hancock's work is in the permanent collections of institutions including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; Dallas Museum of Art, TX; Menil Collection, Houston, TX; Morgan Library & Museum, New York, NY; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, TX; Akron Art Museum, OH; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, Netherlands; and il Museo di arte moderna e contemporanea, Trento, Italy. The recipient of numerous awards, Trenton Doyle Hancock lives and works in Houston, TX.

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