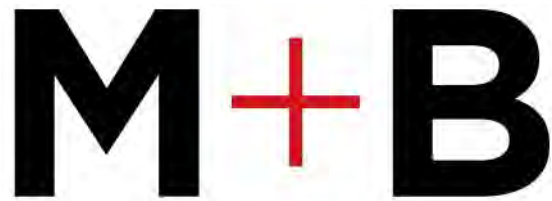




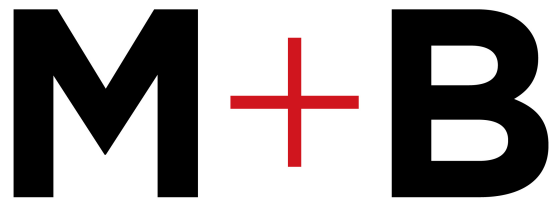
JOSH MANNIS

Press Pack



JOSH MANNIS

Josh Mannis (b. 1976, Boston) received his MFA from the Art Institute of Chicago and BFA from the University of Michigan. Recent solo and two person exhibitions include *Nothing but Trouble* at Know More Games, New York, NY and *Sexus* at Thomas Solomon Gallery, Los Angeles, CA. His work has been featured in thematic exhibitions internationally, including at the Tate Modern, London, UK; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL and Musée d'art Contemporain de Montréal, Québec; among others. His work can currently be viewed in *On the Verge of an Image: Considering Marjorie Keller*, organized by Los Angeles Nomadic Division. Other group exhibition venues include Team Gallery, New York, NY; Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York, NY; Kavi Gupta, Chicago, IL and Retrospective, Hudson, NY. Mannis' work has been reviewed in *ARTFORUM*, *frieze*, *Los Angeles Times* and *The Boston Globe*. Josh Mannis lives and works in Los Angeles.



JOSH MANNIS

BORN 1976, Boston, MA
Lives and works in Los Angeles, CA

EDUCATION

2005 MFA, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL
1999 BFA, University of Michigan, School of Art and Design, Ann Arbor, MI

SELECTED ONE AND TWO PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2018 Sam Davis and Josh Mannis: *Macrosolutions to Megaproblems*, M+B, Los Angeles, CA
2017 NOW, EARTH, Galerie Hussenot, Paris, France
2016 *KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE ESTATE*, M+B, Los Angeles, CA
2014 *Nothing but Trouble*, with Becky Howland, Know More Games, Brooklyn, NY
Sexus, Thomas Solomon Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2012 *Zeal for the Law*, Anthony Greaney Gallery, Boston, MA
2011 *Who's the Father of Learning?*, with Nick Kramer, Thomas Solomon Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
2010 *Variations*, Thomas Solomon Gallery, Los Angeles, CA

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS AND SCREENINGS

2017 Geranium, organized by Adrienne Rubenstein, Stems Gallery, Brussels, Belgium
A Movable Feast I, Galerie Hussenot, Paris, France
2016 *Brad*, 80WSE Gallery at New York University, New York, NY
On the Verge of an Image: Considering Marjorie Keller, LAND (Los Angeles Nomadic Division), Pasadena, CA
PLEASE HAVE ENOUGH ACID IN THE DISH!, organized by Vinny Dotolo, M+B, Los Angeles, CA
Bottom Floor, curated by Max Maslansky, Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
Inaugural Exhibition, Romeo, New York, NY
Someday This Will Be Funny, Company, New York, NY

M+B

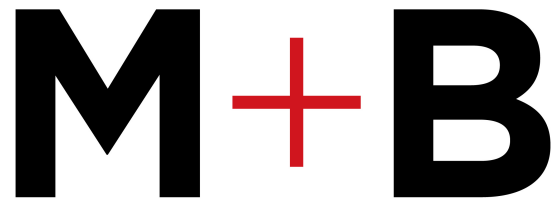
- 2015 *Bloody Red Sun of Fantastic LA*, curated by Rene-Julien Praz, PIASA, Paris, France
Bad Boy Bail Bonds Adopt a Highway, curated by Amanda Ross-Ho, Team Gallery, New York, NY
In An Absolut World True Taste Comes Naturally, curated by Kim Schoen, Camberwell Space, Camberwell College of the Arts, London, UK
Josh Mannis, Brian Rochefort and Mason Saltarelli, Retrospective, Hudson, NY
Maraschino, curated by Adrienne Rubenstein, Fourteen30 Contemporary, Portland, OR
- 2014 *Stairs Into My Eyes*, curated by Dianna Molzan, The Finley, Los Angeles, CA
The Snowman's Melting Teeth, curated by Jason Triefenbach, The George V. Deneff Gallery at Arts and Services for Disabled, Inc., Long Beach, CA
Ibeezin; Seezzions, Michael Jon Gallery, Miami, FL
The Trouble Between Us, curated by Kenneth Tam, The Weingart Gallery at Occidental College, Los Angeles, CA
- 2013 *Made In Space: NY*, curated by Laura Owens and Peter Harkawik, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York, NY and Venus Over Manhattan, New York, NY
Interior 301, curated by Dorothee Dupuis, Galerie Alain Gutharc, Paris, France
Made in Space, curated by Laura Owens and Peter Harkawik, Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2012 *Y... as in Yet*, curated by Olivian Cha, Shanaynay, Paris, France
- 2011 *Family Romance*, Kavi Gupta Gallery, Berlin, Germany
- 2010 *No Soul For Sale*, presented by The Suburban, Oak Park, IL and Milwaukee International, Milwaukee, WI at Tate Modern Museum, London, UK
The Indistinct Seeing, curated by Sonja Gerdes, Infernoesque, Berlin, Germany
- 2009 *Sympathy for the Devil: Art and Rock & Roll since 1967*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL; Musée d'art Contemporain de Montréal, Québec (catalogue)
- 2008 *This Land is Your Land*, curated by Anna Mayer, Eveningside, Val Verde, CA

AWARDS

- 2017 NADA Artadia Award Winner

CURATORIAL PROJECTS

- 2016 *LET LOVE BURN IN ALL THE LAMPS*, Ms Barbers, Los Angeles, CA



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2017 "Josh Mannis Picks Up 2017 New York NADA Artadia Award," *ARTnews*, March 3
- 2016 "Josh Mannis' Knowledge of the Future Estate' at M+B, Los Angeles," *Artinfo*, December 21
Wagley, Catherine. "5 Free Art Shows to See in L.A. This Week," *LA Weekly*, December 21,
- 2015 *Los Angeles Review of Books*, Art Feature for Los Angeles Review of Books, Fall (catalogue)
- 2014 Diehl, Travis. "Josh Mannis," *Artforum*, October
Griffin, Jonathan. "Josh Mannis," *Frieze*, September
Gas, William. "Josh Mannis," *Art Papers*, September
- 2012 Banai, Nait. "Josh Mannis," *Artforum*, April
Pyper, John. "Josh Mannis," *Art Papers*, May
McQuaid, Cate. "Josh Mannis: Ritual and Exultation," *Boston Globe*, February 29
- 2010 Knight, Christopher "A Whimsical and Diabolical Debut," *Los Angeles Times*, January 22

PUBLICATIONS

- 2007 Molon, Dominic, et al. *Sympathy for the Devil: Art and Rock & Roll since 1967*. Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; New Haven and London: Yale University Press



JOSH MANNIS

Selected Portfolio

M+B



Josh Mannis

Installation view of *KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE ESTATE*, solo show at M+B, Los Angeles
November 19, 2016 – January 19, 2017

M+B



Josh Mannis

Installation view of *KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE ESTATE*, solo show at M+B, Los Angeles
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M+B



Josh Mannis

All Things Shining, 2016

oil on canvas

48 x 56 x 1-1/2 inches (121.9 x 142.2 x 3.8 cm)

(JMa.16.014.48)

M+B



Josh Mannis

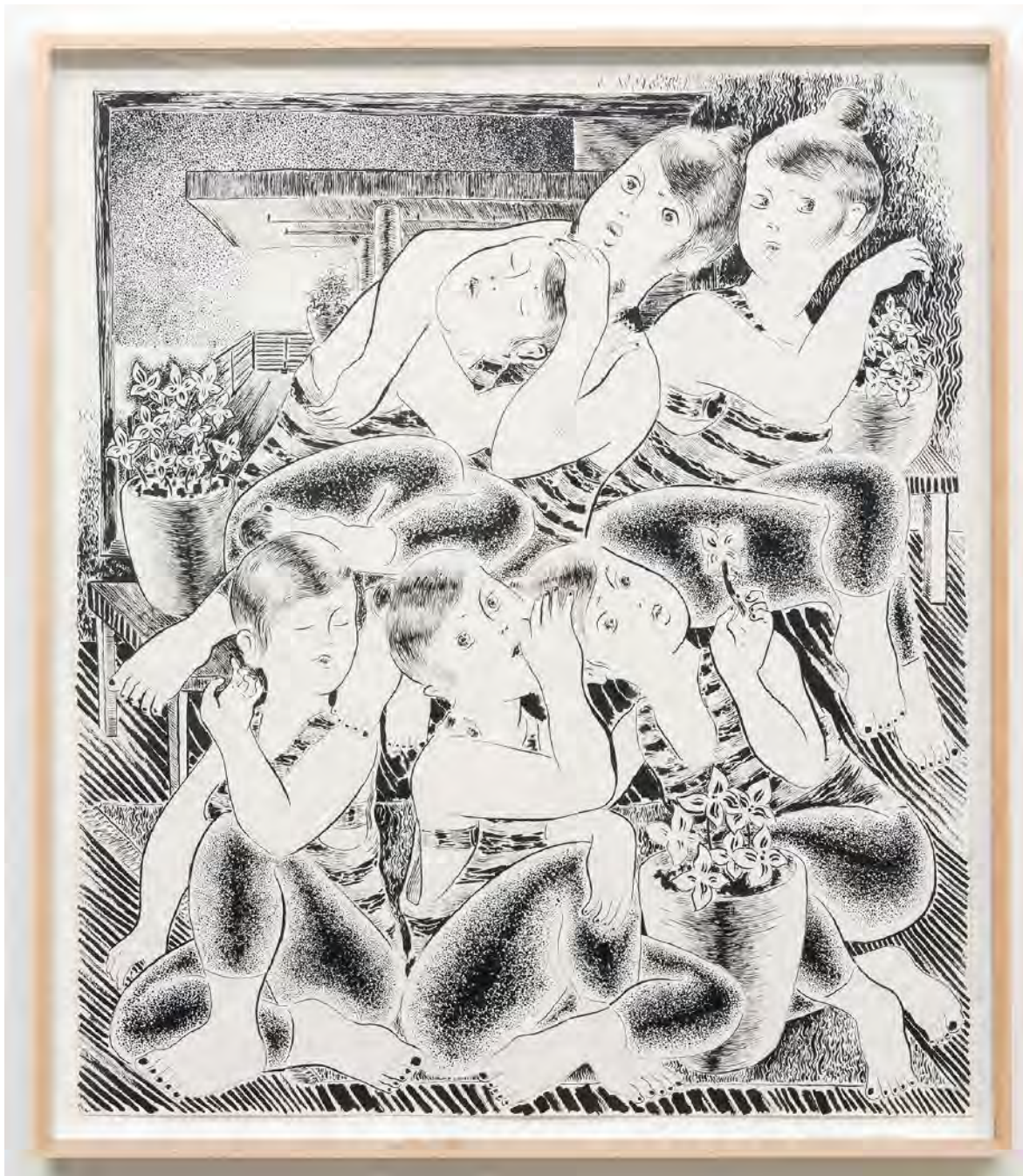
Non Serviam, 2016

oil on canvas

48 x 56 x 1-1/2 inches (121.9 x 142.2 x 3.8 cm)

(JMa.16.013.48)

M+B



Josh Mannis

Secret Wars, 2016

ink on paper

29-1/2 x 25-1/4 inches (74.9 x 64.1 cm)

(JMa.16.007.29)

M+B



Josh Mannis

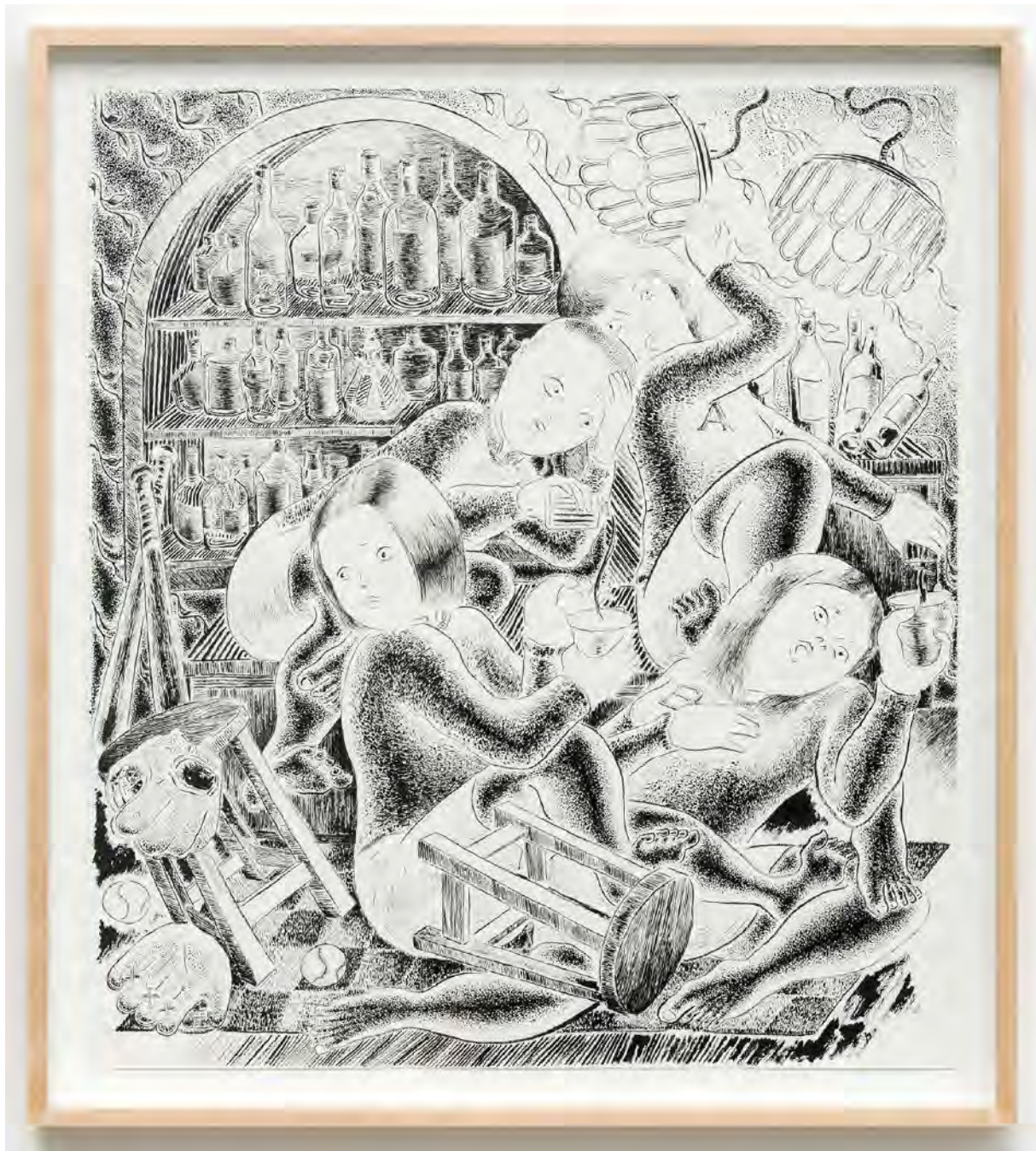
Virtual Neighbors, 2016

ink on paper

29-1/2 x 25-1/4 inches (74.9 x 64.1 cm)

(JMa.16.009.29)

M+B



Josh Mannis

More Power to Them, 2016

ink on paper

24-1/2 x 22 inches (62.2 x 55.9 cm)

(JMa.16.006.24)

M+B



Josh Mannis

Installation view of *Inaugural Exhibition*, group show at Romeo, New York
April 10 – May 8, 2016

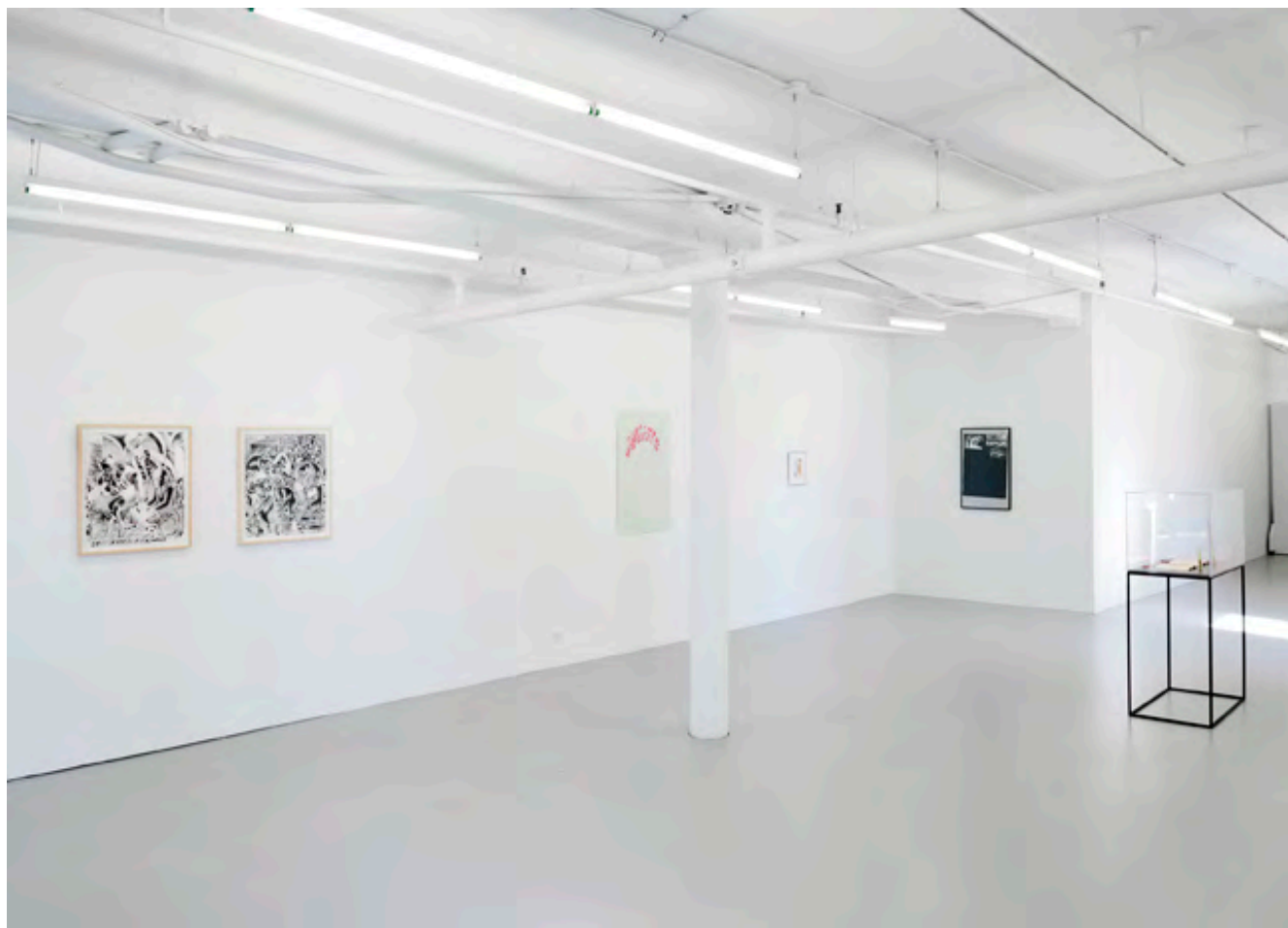
M+B



Josh Mannis

Installation view of *Josh Mannis / Brian Rochefort / Mason Saltarrelli*,
three-person show at Retrospective, New York
March 14 – April 19, 2016

M+B



Josh Mannis

Installation view of *Someday This Will Be Funny*, three-person show at Company, New York
March 2 – April 3, 2016

M+B



Josh Mannis

Installation view of *Nothing but Trouble*, two-person show at Know More Games, Brooklyn
October 14 – December 3, 2014

M+B



Josh Mannis

Installation view of *Nothing but Trouble*, two-person show at Know More Games, Brooklyn
October 14 – December 3, 2014

M+B



Josh Mannis

Installation view of *Y... as in Yet*, group show at Shanaynay, Paris
April 7 – May 20, 2012

M+B



Josh Mannis

Installation view of *Zeal for the Law*, solo show at Anthony Greaney Gallery, Boston
February – March, 2012

M+B



Josh Mannis

Zeal for the Law, 2012

video

2 minutes

edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof

(JMa.12.001.00)

<https://vimeo.com/41117017>

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Josh Mannis

Music Is..., 2008

video

4 minutes 39 seconds

edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof

(JMa.08.001.00)

<https://vimeo.com/13637562>

M+B



Josh Mannis

Downward Dog, 2007

video

6 minutes 56 seconds

edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof

(JMa.07.001.00)

<https://vimeo.com/13634495>



JOSH MANNIS

Press and Press Releases

M+B

ARTNEWS

Josh Mannis Picks Up 2017 New York
NADA Artadia Award

By Andrew Russeth
March 3, 2017

There are hundreds of artists with work on view at the NADA New York fair this week, but only one can be crowned the winner of the New York NADA Artadia Award, which comes with a check for \$5,000. That person is Josh Mannis, the Los Angeles-based artist who has been making a name for himself in recent years with angsty, anxious figurative paintings that evince touches of Dana Schutz, deprived pre-World War II German art, and Victorian-era erotic drawings. His work is on view at NADA at the booth of Paris's Galerie Éric Hussenot.



Josh Mannis, *Going Through the Rough Way*, 2017

Mannis, who has had shows at M+B and Thomas Solomon Gallery in Los Angeles and the late, lamented Know More Games in Brooklyn (with the great Becky Howland), was selected by the Hirshhorn Museum's curator at large, Gianni Jetzer, and the Jewish Museum's assistant curator, Rebecca Shaykin. In a statement, the two jurors lauded the artist's "effortless combination of art history tracing an arc from Neue Sachlichkeit to Sinister Pop," which "is countered by postcard views of American politics. The protagonists of his paintings live in a feverish dream that is fueled by conspiracy and ultimately violence." (Which sounds a lot like the present, actually.)

New Yorkers may recall seeing Mannis's work at Company gallery last year in a tidy three-person show with Aidan Koch and Bobbi Woods. Have a look images of that exhibition at Company's site, and then head on over to NADA to take a look at Mannis's work in the flesh!

M+B

NADA Artadia Award Recipient at NADA New York 2017

March 3, 2017

The New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA) and Artadia are pleased to announce Josh Mannis as the recipient of the NADA Artadia Award at NADA New York 2017, a \$5,000 unrestricted, merit-based Award granted to one artist exhibiting at the fair.

Mannis' work is exhibited at Galerie Éric Hussenot, booth 4.05 at NADA New York. A jury comprising two renowned curators, Gianni Jetzer, Curator-at-Large, The Hirshhorn, and Rebecca Shaykin, Leon Levy Assistant Curator, The Jewish Museum, selected Mannis. This is the ninth time NADA and Artadia have partnered to present the Award.



Josh Mannis, *Going Through the Rough Way*, 2017

Jurors Jetzer and Shaykin said of Mannis: “The work of Josh Mannis stands out in today’s realm of figurative painting. His effortless combination of art history tracing an arc from Neue Sachlichkeit to Sinister Pop is countered by postcard views of American politics. The protagonists of his paintings live in a feverish dream that is fueled by conspiracy and ultimately violence.”

Heather Hubbs, Executive Director, NADA, and Carolyn Ramo, Executive Director, Artadia, articulated the intention behind the Award: “We are thrilled to be recognizing Josh Mannis’ work at NADA New York – with the fair, we champion the galleries, and with the NADA Artadia Award, we champion the artists. In this exciting week full of so many dynamic participants, it’s important to recognize the individuals behind the objects we admire.”

The NADA Artadia Award acknowledges innovative voices working in contemporary art today. This unique collaboration highlights the ways in which nonprofit organizations and art fairs can come together to celebrate artistic excellence. Mannis will have access to the lifetime benefits of the Artadia Awards program, including participation in Art & Dialogue, exhibition opportunities, studio visits with curators and collectors, and a profile page on the Artadia Artist Registry.

M+B

artnet® news

'Activism' Is the Hot New Art Trend at NADA New York 2017.
The whole fair is colored by the movement.

By Christian Viveros-Fauné
March 3, 2017

If the times are a' changing—and they are, to the strains of “The Battle Hymn of the Republic”—one rightly expects art to change with them. But should the same also be true of art fairs?

Last December, the Miami fairs seemed stuck in limbo or, more charitably, confused about how or even whether to respond to news of Donald Trump's election win. But after a few topsy-turvy months and several dozen presidential executive orders, not a few art galleries have thrown political caution to the wind. Where the NADA New York art fair is concerned, yesterday's fence sitters are today's firebrands.

Change is in the air at the Skylight Clarkson North building on Washington Street, the NADA art fair's new West Soho home. Also new is the fact that NADA—which has operated a well-known Miami Beach fair since 2002—moved its New York fair from May to March, opposite the Armory and Independent shows and closer to the Whitney Biennial (it opens March 17).

But the biggest change of all may be the fact that the non-profit organization that runs the fair—the New Art Dealers Alliance (NADA)—has fully embraced a platform of embattled liberal causes. When asked to define the overwhelming trend that defines this year's fairs, NADA spokesperson Adam Abdalla responded succinctly: “Activism.”

Wherever collectors decide to drop their coin this year, NADA has decided it is putting its money where its mouth is. A month ago fair organizers announced that 50 percent of the gate receipts



Josh Mannis, *Going Through the Rough Way*, 2017

M+B

will go to benefit the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)—“no organization works harder to protect the rights of all than the ACLU,” NADA Executive Director Heather Hubbs explained in February. The remainder of the proceeds from ticket sales, NADA announced, will be used to support the fair’s International Exhibitor Prize Program, a scheme the organization employs to help first-time exhibitors traveling from outside the US to NADA New York for 2018.

Notably, the fair’s activist theme extends beyond its organizers’ personal ideals to NADA’s programming and also to an important number of the artworks on display. Among the more than 100 galleries and projects representing 37 cities in some 14 countries, nearly a quarter—according to my unscientific reckoning—have chosen to ring in this year’s art fair season with artworks that can be described as activist in spirit. Placed cheek by jowl with other worthy objects that have zero political aspirations, the best of these pieces—done in various styles and in multiple media—make a convincing visual argument for why art fairs should respond to world events. At a morally raw time like this, art is stronger when it can be linked to life.

One of the most openly activist gallery presentations at NADA belongs to Alden Projects, the Lower East Side gallery that followed up last year’s presidential election with a show of veteran Jenny Holzer’s Reagan-era street posters titled “Rejoice! Our Times Are Intolerable.” On view at their booth are a number of Holzer’s *Inflammatory Essays*—printed on sheets of colored paper, they were once wheat-pasted on hoardings all over New York—hung alongside black and white photographs by both conceptualist Eleanor Antin and Suzanne Lacy, the doyenne of social practice. Taken together, the works of these art “sisters” assumes the cumulative power of resisters.

Two Los Angeles galleries, Commonwealth & Council and Skibum MacArthur, have teamed up to stage a group presentation of four artists—Carmen Winant, Dannielle Dean, David Alekhogie, and Kang Seung Lee—who draw on images in the mainstream media to explore issues of race, gender, and class. Of the four, Seung Lee’s graphite drawings and large-scale photographs are the standouts. Featuring images of the 1992 LA Riots (this year marks the event’s 25th anniversary), these works often obliterate the riot’s human figures and leave burning cars and empty shopping carts as eerie evidence of one of America’s worst outbreaks of mass violence.

Nearby, Manhattan’s Fort Gansevoort Gallery features the work of Josh and Benny Safdie, established filmmakers with individual sidelines in the visual arts (their latest movie, *Good Time*, stars *Twilight*’s Robert Pattinson). While the former presents an enigmatic photo of the presidential seal on the jet-black door of a limousine (it’s titled, simply, “Presidential”), the latter presents a set of large wall-mounted “cutouts” the artist-filmmaker made of not-so-ambiguous media images: one is a picture of ex-Portland Trail Blazers basketball coach Jack Ramsey being showered in champagne by his black players, the other a hapless portrait of the crack-addled late rapper Ol’ Dirty Bastard.

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Additionally, two solo booths provide different versions of what could, under present circumstances, be called “protest art.” The first, Chris Dorland’s presentation at Brussels’s Super Dakota Gallery, is an immersive installation made up of abstracted advertisements printed onto aluminum panels; the artist describes them as a “dystopian vision of our 21st century consumerist society.”

The second, at the stand of Chicago’s Patron Gallery, features the powerful “scrubbed” photo-transfer on metal works of Colombian-Mexican artist Harold Mendez. Mendez’s distressed images of a riot in 1960s Colombia and of a man being punched in the face recall the work of the late Gustav Metzger, and will be featured at the upcoming Whitney Biennial.

Elsewhere, the presentations of art outfits like Klemm’s Berlin, Paris’s Eric Hussenot and Brooklyn’s Signal Gallery remind one that, in our current global context, most symbolic products inadvertently take on unexpected political meanings.

Klemm’s Berlin, for one, features Viktoria Binschtok’s collaged and framed photos of a glass fish and a hieratic view of the Statue of Liberty; Signal displays a lightbox featuring women in headscarves that pips Meriem Bennani’s recent film *Your Year* (it is currently on view at the Barclay Center’s Oculus Display in Brooklyn); while Eric Hussenot’s booth features LA artist Josh Mannis’s painting *Going Through the Rough Way*. An image of four (rather than three) graces flanked by a window view of the White House and an M-16 rifle, the painting combines both ambiguity and a firm nod to the imponderables of American politics in this bewildering new era.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



JOSH MANNIS KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE ESTATE

November 19, 2016 – January 19, 2017

Opening Reception

Saturday, November 19, 2016 from 6 to 8 pm

M+B is pleased to announce *KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE ESTATE*, an exhibition of new paintings and drawings by Josh Mannis. This is the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery. The show runs from November 19, 2016 through January 19, 2017, with an opening reception on Saturday, November 19 from 6 to 8 pm.

A fixture in the Los Angeles art scene, Josh Mannis is best known for his singular ink-on-paper drawings that revel in the obsessive-compulsive experience of creating work and the viewer's absorption in looking. The show will present a new suite of these complex all-over compositions that feature the artist's trademark fetishistic attention to surface. In his non-hierarchical approach to image-making, each element—every object, twisting baroque-posing figure and background—is equally insistent. The resulting image creates a shimmering, vibrating graphic effect.

This exhibition will also debut a new painting series by Mannis. These paintings allow for a broadening of the gestural mark and an expansion into color. As with the works on paper, the emphasis is on the experiential project of visual pleasure—the overwhelming optical effect of detailed patterns, colors and flourishes on the canvas. Thematically, these works describe an attempt to imagine a life of equilibrium in various forms, from Southern California culture to new age Orientalism. Mannis' work is informed by a broad but interconnected range of art historical and contemporary cultural references. For this show the influences include Op Art, Patagonia fleeces, white guy Buddhism, art class field trips, sorority hazing, psychedelic rugs, Hubert Dreyfus, artificial intelligence, yoga pants, Xbox, The Orsini, William Blake, blue recycling bins, mystic revelation, Eagle Rock condos, Ronald Colman, lite beer, Marvel Comics' *The Vision*, leafy ferns, directors chairs, desert camo cargo shorts, Alan Watts and more.

Josh Mannis (b. 1976, Boston) received his MFA from the Art Institute of Chicago and BFA from the University of Michigan. Recent solo and two person exhibitions include *Nothing but Trouble* at Know More Games, New York, NY and *Sexus* at Thomas Solomon Gallery, Los Angeles, CA. His work has been featured in thematic exhibitions internationally, including at the Tate Modern, London, UK; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL and Musée d'art Contemporain de Montréal, Québec; among others. His work can currently be viewed in *On the Verge of an Image: Considering Marjorie Keller*, organized by Los Angeles Nomadic Division. Other group exhibition venues include Team Gallery, New York, NY; Night Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York, NY; Kavi Gupta, Chicago, IL and Retrospective, Hudson, NY. Mannis' work has been reviewed in *ARTFORUM*, *frieze*, *Los Angeles Times* and *The Boston Globe*. Josh Mannis lives and works in Los Angeles.

Location:	M+B , 612 North Almont Drive, Los Angeles, California 90069
Show Title:	Josh Mannis: KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE ESTATE
Exhibition Dates:	November 19, 2016 – January 19, 2017
Opening Reception:	Saturday, November 19, 6 – 8pm
Gallery Hours:	Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm, and by appointment

For press inquiries, please contact Jeanie Choi at (310) 550-0050 or jeanie@mbart.com.

For all other inquiries, contact Shannon Richardson at shannon@mbart.com or Jonlin Wung at jonlin@mbart.com.

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M+B

BLOUINARTINFO

Josh Mannis' 'Knowledge of the Future Estate' at M+B, Los Angeles

December 21, 2016
By BLOUIN ARTINFO DATEBOOK



Josh Mannis, "All Things Shining," 2016
Oil on canvas, 56 x 48 x 1.5 inches



Josh Mannis, "Knowledge of the Future Estate," 2016,
oil on canvas, 56 x 48 x 1.5 inches

An exhibition of new paintings and drawings by Josh Mannis titled "Knowledge of the Future Estate" is open at M+B in Los Angeles through January 7, 2017.

Best known for his exceptional ink-on-paper works that revel in the obsessive experience of creating and the compulsive desire to absorb new experiences, Mannis presents suite of complex pieces characteristic of his fetishistic attention to surface. The current exhibition also includes an expansion of his repertoire into color, with an emphasis on visual pleasure and the optical effect of detailed patterns and graphics. A graduate of the Art Institute of Chicago and the University of Michigan, the artist has mounted exhibitions at several major galleries and art venues such as the Tate Modern, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and Know More Games in New York.

"Josh Mannis: Knowledge of the Future Estate" is on view at M+B, 612 North Almont Drive, Los Angeles, California 90069.

M + B

ARTFORUM

Josh Mannis

October 2014
By Travis Diehl

The tightly wound formalism of “Sexus,” Josh Mannis’s recent solo show at Thomas Solomon Gallery, might at first have seemed to run counter to his cutely pornographic subjects—grinning figures who stroke and fondle one another in parks and on floors. These scenes fill ten nearly square ink-on-paper drawings—eight in black, two in red—that were hung evenly on the gallery’s three white walls. But this buttoned-down hang and Mannis’s conventional medium were both support and stimulation for the works’ lecherous charge. Like Fernando Botero’s paintings of voluminous couples picnicking or Édouard Manet’s 1863 *Le Déjeuner sur l’herbe*, the drawings here contribute to an art-historical tradition in which portraits of bourgeois meals serve as pretexts for pushing both moral and stylistic good taste. In *A Toast!* (all works 2014), a couple sips wine on a blanket, their backs turned to two uniformed officers. Oblivious to—or perhaps egged on by—the cops’ presence, the man slides a finger into his partner’s panties. The tension between the clothed and exposed bodies, their glances and positions, and what is seen and hidden here intensifies the crude quality of the rendering. An almost obscene density of marks resolves into risqué social compositions—entwined twosomes or threesomes, with still others watching. While voyeurism is explicitly represented in only some drawings—in the prying eyes of soldiers, police, or analysts—an eerie, lurking quality remains throughout. Each orgy is framed in whitewashed wood, a secret in plain sight.

Other situations are stranger still. *Tomorrow’s Story 2* shows another picnicker, a boy who swings an ax at an anthropomorphized, surprised, gaping tree while his companion hides behind a camera. In *What About This Love?*, a midcentury-styled couple is pictured slinking through a brick alley and buying an ice cream cone from a vendor dressed as a cop. He shines his flashlight in the couple’s direction: As the man offers his date a



Josh Mannis, *What About This Love?*, 2014
ink on paper, 25 × 22 1/2"

cone, her hand helps his erection slip through his seersucker trousers. The flashlight, penis, and cone are presented here as a trinity of forms; the logic of composition shapes this encounter. Indeed, Mannis’s characters always seem to be playing out fantasies, brazenly engaged in illicit acts as if no one was around to look. Formally, too, the drawings approach the queasy reality of dreams or drugs. Daylight is rendered in black ink, squirming patterns swarm around the pictured figures, and hatch marks effect sinews and exposed muscle. The dress an analyst wears in *The Technique Is the Technology* has the same filleted quality as a naked man’s chest, and in *Boyfriend and Girlfriend*, the squiggly gingham of a beach blanket bleeds into the texture of a woman’s hair. Mannis’s figures always seem on the verge of dissolving into abstract tangles of marks.

Time periods crossbreed in “Sexus,” too: flapper haircuts and 1950s-style horn-rimmed glasses; psychoanalysis-type notepads and iPhones. The show’s title, of course, nods to Henry Miller’s 1949 novel of the same name, an account of the author’s licentious youth in 1920s Brooklyn. This underlying literary reference seems to ground the drawings’ otherwise anachronistic elements in the debauchery of Miller’s modernist bohemia. Like Miller, the artist has a yen for an art so strange that what it might liberate in a viewer has the potential to seep into life—as though these spermy marks and sated expressions could penetrate even the most traditional social situations. Yet, like the squirrely patterns of psychedelia, Mannis’s drawings throb with anxiety—the thrill and threat of voyeurism or the paranoid fantasies of the outcast. “Sexus” reifies the fear that ultimate freedom might not simply be the enlightened flouting of social norms, but the pervy pleasure of the public masturbator.

M + B

ART PAPERS

September/October 2014

JOSH MANNIS

Thomas Solomon Gallery, Los Angeles

Thanks to the Internet, every homeless person, suburban mom, police officer, and middle school bully exists in a post-pornography world. Fetish has slowly seeped into the public conversation and is almost ordinary: our collective awareness of the variety and existence of other people's kinks dissolves obsession of its objectivity. Taking its title from the first part of Henry Miller's *The Rosy Crucifixion* trilogy, *Sexus* (May 31–July 12, 2014), the final show at Los Angeles' Thomas Solomon was, however, not about a universal erotic pluralism. Josh Mannis' pen instead leads us to become complicit in the voyeurism of his characters and scenes, and addresses the terms of our desire in the contemporary moment.

This present and palpable eroticism delimits Mannis' realm of looking. His figures' doll-like, glazed faces reveal a leisure class hovering in various states of arousal, and offer little insight into any psychological complexities beyond a blasé bliss. What is complicated in this body of work is located in these figures' interactions with their environments, and Mannis' provision of devolved textual accompaniments for the viewer. *You Handyman* (2014) features a notepad with the monosyllabic, labial-stop utterances "yup" and "nope"; these lazy particles steer us into a Margaret Keane-eyed, passive-aggressive masturbation scene. The drawings direct our gaze to decisive moments in his sexual narratives. The images contrast the banality of eroticism with a sinister and apotropaic negative sun—a tolerated violence in visual culture. That sun's glare casts equally nostalgic light on a previous time of erotic subversion, avoiding the 21st century's relative frankness, an effect perhaps enhanced by some of the characters' Gatsbyesque haircuts and styling.

Mannis constructs his characters in a sort of mosaic manner, giving expression to faces through repeated lines and small points. Their similarly treated environments allow the figures to blend in, camouflaged, in essence, by means of texture. As the sexuality is simultaneously becoming both more liberated and more commonplace, it too relies less on tools for hiding. Sexuality and eroticism fade into the background, vacating love to become part of the everyday environment, lusty in name

only. Simply looking at Mannis' leisurely nudes forces us to confront our own comforts and judgments about what we choose to keep in and out of the bedroom and the public sphere, and whether we are possibly conflating both spaces. His protagonists are often somewhere outdoors, on picnic blankets or in the woods, at times in the vein of Édouard Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863). Yet Mannis' characters are not in repose, nor are they defiantly opposing the mores of their day. Rather, his eroticized figures are intentionally prosaic, ready to fill Charles Barsotti's *New Yorker* pages. We look at them and marvel at their complacency—and by extension, our own.

Mannis deftly manipulates negative space and shadow. With ink and paper, light and dark, foreground and background, subject and object, line and shape, and surface and depth, he recognizes drawing's fundamental characteristic as an instrument to manipulate binary systems. He uses his blacks, reds, and blues as positive shadows. In *A Toast* (2014) and *Song of the Self* (2014), the faces of the foregrounded characters are totally gross, abstracted ink shapes barely resembling human features, but which instead are consummate shadows. By means of an aggressive chiaroscuro, these

works successfully extract aggression and passion from dusk's unavoidable abstraction. Both images feature similar beacons of negative space, radiating lines that fill up the drawings' backgrounds. Their white, inkless spots dictate how the ink is to be used. Both images additionally feature secondary figures passing judgment at active ones—a sort of metacommentary on duality. That is to say, these are drawings both about drawing, and about drawing stares.

Mannis' characters' emptied vitality is simply his stylus. His brush composes scenes that duel with what we regard as positive value and socially acceptable. His sun burns us with our own knowing, as we march toward shadows populated by heat.

—William J. Gass



ABOVE: Josh Mannis, *Boyfriend and Girlfriend*, 2014, ink on paper, 25 x 22.5 inches [courtesy of Thomas Solomon Gallery]

M+B

frieze

Josh Mannis

August 12, 2014
By Jonathan Griffin

A couple lie naked on a rug with their feet lolling in the air. She smokes; he holds his chin in his hands and gazes sideways at her, a quiet smile on his lips. They've probably just had sex. She is looking directly at us, or she would be – except her large, oval eyes have been entirely blacked out by the artist. They are unnerving empty holes.

The picture, *Upstairs, Downstairs* (all works 2014), is rendered in ink on paper, as were the other nine remarkable drawings in Josh Mannis's exhibition 'Sexus' (named after Henry Miller's 1949 novel in which, the press release explained, 'the permissions of sex, and those of artistic becoming are often one and the same'). It is not worth dwelling too long on titles, though. Mannis is a master of the red herring and though these are narrative scenarios, their particular allegorical significances are unreliable and fully understood only by the artist.

Almost every detail in *Upstairs, Downstairs* seems to be a deliberate distraction from the obvious focus of the picture – the girl's eyes. For starters, the matching pattern of the rug and the fabric on a director's chair (which stands, oddly, balanced on the couple's backs) looks vaguely like a grid of swastikas. Then there is the stippled, negative shading of highlights on the figures' arms and faces, their finely rendered and glossy hair, the ecstatic arabesques of the potted house plants that frame the composition, and the odd detail that the girl has both a nose and a lip ring – odd because, as with all these drawings, the scene has a distinctly non-contemporary atmosphere: out of time in the way that it is sometimes hard to tell if a *New Yorker* cover is from the 2010s or the 1930s.



Josh Mannis, *What About This Love?*, 2014
ink on paper, 25 x 22 1/2"

The drawings in 'Sexus' are about attention and distraction, devotion and obsession. All depict couples or threesomes, frequently in flagrante delicto. *Upstairs, Downstairs*, as it happens, is the only instance in which there is not some third party intruding on the action. In *You Handyman*, a gentleman proffers his penis to two ladies mid-embrace. (They seem unperturbed.) In *A Toast!*, two uniformed soldiers look on in the background as a couple get frisky during a picnic. Even the protagonists of *Boyfriend and Girlfriend* – also on a rug, this time by the sea – are distracted by something on his iPhone. (Again, the anachronistic detail.)

Absorption occurs not, as we might expect, in the relations between these characters, who by and large wear impassive expressions on their large round faces. Instead, it is Mannis who seems absorbed. In places, his brushwork is extraordinarily fine, adorning contours with hatching and stippling as if he is the one getting off here; in other areas – often, weirdly, on characters' faces – his hand becomes heavy and the ink goes on coarse and dry.

His mischievous attitude to the expected hierarchy of compositional elements seems analogous to the contrarian dynamic of display and revelation that these pictures set up. Their monochromatic, graphic style – which we might call broadly illustrative – developed, in 19th- and 20th-century print media, from a desire to convey explicit meaning, rather than to obfuscate. Here, however, the most interesting part of the picture is often off to one side; eroticism resides in the marginal, kinky game of describing, showing, looking and withholding.

In *What About This Love?*, a man buys ice cream from a policeman down a dark alley while his lady-friend grasps his cock. The cop holds up his torch, apparently happy to help. What a complicated transaction! Despite the intimacy of these scenes, it usually feels as if the action is being performed for someone else. Which, in a fairly obvious sense, it is. The problem – and the delight – is never being able to tell who is having the most fun: the viewer or the artist.

M + B

ARTFORUM

Josh Mannis

April 2012
By Nuit Banai

The rather beguiling title of Josh Mannis's exhibition "Zeal for the Law" interconnects what might otherwise seem to be a rather disparate body of work. Such an emphatic allusion to authority also invites appraisal of the artist's drawing, collage, and video work as successful citations of art-historical styles and provocative explorations of genre. His compilation of procedures, which hits all the right contemporary signifiers, emits a distinct whiff of le bon ton; yet, with equal aplomb, Mannis transgresses these very same aesthetic regulations.

For example, *The Law*, 2011, is a hanging tartan textile adorned with two safety pins, each fastening a gold-plated brass nipple from which an ample golden chain dangles to the floor. As this work cleverly explores the hybrid possibilities of painting, it is difficult to fathom whether Mannis is also evoking the symbol of Scottish nationalism, if not steampunk sexual fetishism. Across the room, the eight ink drawings of *Nadia Comaneci Generation*, 2011, partially incorporate the color palette of the Romanian flag in lines resembling the nation's 1976 Olympic leotard.



Josh Mannis
Zeal for the Law, 2012
still from a color HD video
7 minutes 56 seconds.

Yet yellow and red, in Mannis's drawings, are joined by green rather than blue, and the exceptional gymnast named in the title—noted for scoring the first ever "perfect ten" in an Olympic event—here appears as a stout-legged creature with arms resembling crustacean claws. In a related work, *Nadia Comaneci*, 2011 (an ink portrait of the gymnast in wild abandon), the athlete's likeness has been punctuated by a newspaper image in which she appears an elegant waif.

In both tributes, Mannis has transformed perfection into the grotesque, a declassifying and degrading gesture continued in *Zeal for the Law*, 2012, a hypnotic video showing the artist barefoot, repeating a sequence of ritualistic movements to a sound track of industrial bass and a backdrop of streaming dark clouds. Wearing scruffy tartan pants (matching the tartan painting), a sleeveless white shirt that barely covers his paunch and the edges of his farmer's tan, an abundant blond wig, and a rubber mask painted white around the nose and mouth, Mannis manipulates the same golden chain that he subsequently worked into *The Law*, repurposing the "erect nipple" baubles as potentially sadistic knuckle rings. The artist whose corpulent body is a far cry from the fourteen-year-old Comaneci's lithe physique, follows the music's downbeat and, with each forceful stomp, makes hand signs to the camera, alternatively holding up one, two, three, or four fingers. In this performance, which scrambles codes of masculinity and femininity, Mannis animates the fiend that inhabits the law; it's Comaneci's inner drag queen if only she had been allowed to take a day off from training, go to art school, and wolf down a few hamburgers.

The exhibition's cumulative effect suggests that there is only a tiny difference between a passion for the law and bondage to it, or between earnest adherence to the rules and their perversion. Mannis suggests that, whether regarding the conventions of art or competitive sports, identity of the nation-state or constructs of gender, the law is fundamentally unstable. Paradoxically, of course, he also exploits an arsenal of well-honed contemporary strategies to communicate these ideals of misbehavior, as, for example, by transforming the surface of painting into kinky assemblage or using video as a space for the queering of identity. The frisson of transgression here treads carefully along the periphery of normativity though, pointing to the difficulty of ever truly operating beyond the rules. Given these limits, Mannis is most impressive in his video work, through which he embraces the simulacral as the very condition of the creative act. In ways that recall the work of artists such as Ryan Trecartin and Brian Bress, Mannis uses irreverent pastiche to reprocess the ciphers of contemporary experience and carve out an original image zone where new rules might yet be formulated. Yet he is also acutely aware that in an era when "acting out" is a democratic prerogative facilitated by such distribution platforms as YouTube and Tumblr, the gallery still functions as "the law" by sanctioning the name of art.

M+B

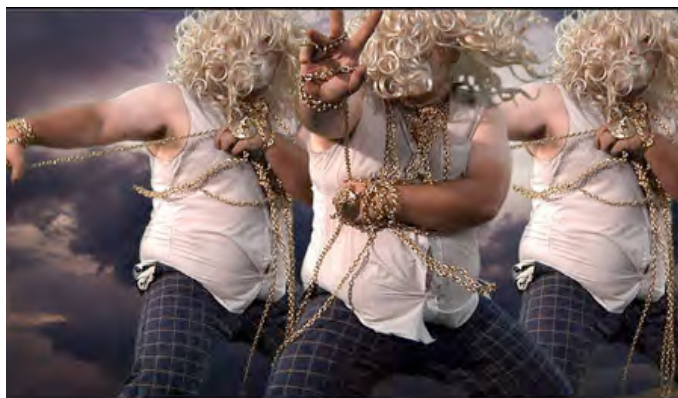
The Boston Globe

Ritual and exultation at Anthony Greaney

February 29, 2012
By Cate McQuaid

There are stages to go through before you view Josh Mannis's video "Zeal for the Law," now at Anthony Greaney. First, visit the gallery to see drawings and a wall sculpture by the artist. The video is in a room in the basement. The work upstairs relates to the video but can't truly prepare you for it.

The white-cube gallery is a pristine anteroom to the dark unknown below. Mannis and Greaney walk the viewer through a ritual with this setup, and Mannis's work is all about ritual. The ink drawings, "Nadia Comaneci Generations," are loose and repetitive. These are not so much portraits of the Romanian gymnast, famous for garnering perfect 10s and gold medals in the 1976 Olympics, as expressions about her. Feathery strokes describe muscular calves and a tight trunk, but the works are all movement, and all versions of the same movement, a conceptual nod to the repetition of routine.



A still from Josh Mannis's video *Zeal for the Law*

The wall sculpture, "The Law," features gold-plated brass nipples hanging over blue cotton. The brass nipples mimic gold medals and comment on the struggles of young gymnasts, for whom the terrain between girlhood and womanhood is particularly fraught.

Pass through a narrow hallway and proceed down to the basement, where "Zeal for the Law" is projected onto a wall. It shows Mannis himself, a portly man in his 30s, wearing a blond mane of a wig and a white mask, dancing violently to a ferocious drumbeat. Clouds cascade through a dusky sky behind him. Mannis is there by himself. Then there are two, three, or four of him, each grabbing at the gold chain around his neck, each pounding his legs and arms. It is comical, weird, and utterly captivating.

Mannis is like a trickster figure in certain cultures: He's masked. He combines masculine and feminine elements. He makes himself into someone you would not want to run into on the street - the embodiment of otherness - and exulting in that, he seems to hold magic in his hands. Like a gymnast, he is also conjuring something near perfect out of repetition.

JOSH MANNIS: *Zeal for the Law*

At: Anthony Greaney, 450 Harrison Ave.

through March 24. 617-482-0055