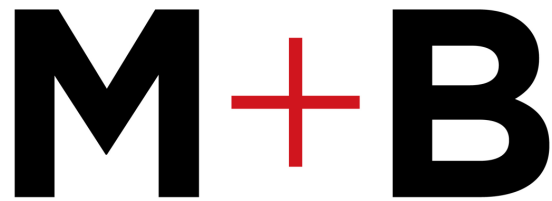


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PAT PHILLIPS

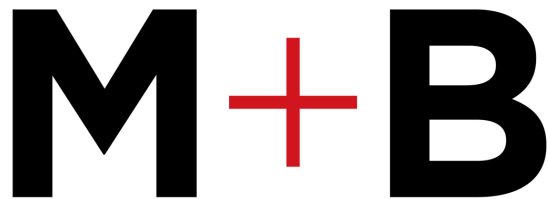
Press Pack



PAT PHILLIPS

Pat Phillips' paintings combine personal and historical imagery into surreal juxtapositions, drawing on his experience living in America to meditate on complex questions of race, class, labor and a militarized culture. Phillips, who grew up primarily in a small town in Louisiana, found his way to art through painting and photographing boxcars. He embraces this entry point, creating paintings that discuss the Americana subculture, as well as the current social and political threads running through American culture. His works often contain references to confederate flags, fences, and guns—all objects that suggest the violent underpinnings of this country and its institutions.

Pat Phillips was born in Lakenheath, England in 1987. His work was featured in the 2019 Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. Solo exhibitions include *ROOTS* (Antenna Gallery, New Orleans), *Told You Not to Bring That Ball* (Masur Museum of Art, Monroe) and *Summer Madness* (M+B, Los Angeles). This summer his work will be featured in *THIS IS AMERICA* at Kunstraum Potsdam in Germany. In 2017, he received a Joan Mitchell Painters & Sculptors Grant. Phillips has also participated in residencies at the Vermont Studio Center and Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture. His work can be found in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Block Museum of Art, Evanston, IL; and New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA, among others.



PAT PHILLIPS

BORN 1987, Lakenheath, England

EDUCATION

2017 Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, Skowhegan, ME

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 *Untitled: (Works on Paper)*, M+B, Los Angeles, CA
Jeffrey Deitch, New York, NY (forthcoming)
- 2020 *Summer Madness*, M+B, Los Angeles, CA
- 2019 *SubSuperior*, Catinca Tabacaru Gallery, New York, NY
- 2018 *FRUITMAN*, Spring Break Art Show, Manhattan, NY
- 2017 *Told You Not to Bring That Ball*, Masur Museum, Monroe, LA
- 2017 *Manifest Graffiti*, Acadiana Center of the Arts, Lafayette, LA
- 2014 *ROOTS*, Antenna Gallery, New Orleans, LA
- 2013 *Uncle Tom's Watermelon Rebellion of 89*, Collaboration with Johnathan Wilson Acadiana Center of the Arts, Lafayette, LA
- 2011 *Vague Topic 101*, River Oaks Square, Alexandria, LA
- 2010 *The Memphis Retrospective*, Northwestern University, Natchitoches, LA
- 2009 *The Dirty Southern Train Yard Experience*, Emmanuel Gallery, Alexandria, LA

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

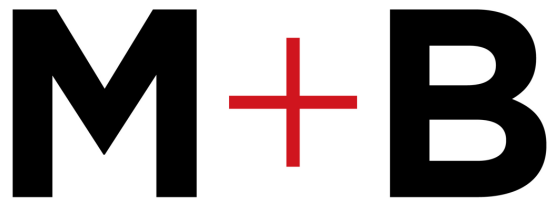
- 2021 *THIS IS AMERICA*, curated by Mike Gessner, Kunstraum Potsdam, Potsdam, Germany (forthcoming)
Sharif Bey, Eddy Kamuanga, Pat Phillips, Michael Ray Charles and Kathia St Hilaire, Zidoun-Bossuyt Gallery, Luxembourg

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- 2020 *We Fight to Build a Free World*, Jewish Museum, New York, NY, Curator, Jonathan Horowitz
Frieze Art Fair, Deitch Gallery, Los Angeles
- 2019 *On The Road II*, Oolite Arts, Miami, FL, Curator, Larry Ossei-Mensah
PUNCH, Jeffrey Deitch Projects, Los Angeles, CA, Curator: Nina Chanel Abney
Whitney Biennial, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, Curators: Rujeko Hockley and Jane Panetta
- 2017 *Land Lines, Double Shotgun*, One Love Community Art Space, YAYA Inc, New Orleans, LA, Curator: Ana Hernandez/Level Collective
54th Annual Juried Competition, Masur Museum, Monroe, LA, Curator: Gia Hamilton
How To Survive A Neo Pop Surreal Southern Apocalyptic Terrorism Extinction Level, Second Story Gallery, New Orleans, LA, Curator: John Isiah Walton
- 2016 *What's Going On*, Boyd Satellite, New Orleans, LA, Curator: Ginette Bone and Blake Boyd
7 On 7, Antenna Gallery, New Orleans, LA, Curator: Angel Perdomo and Ernest Littles
- 2015 *Smash*, Healthcare Gallery, Baton Rouge, LA, Curator: Rondeyna Hart
- 2013 *Whither the American Dream*, Punch Gallery, Seattle, WA, Juror: Rock Hushka
Guitar Project, Alexandria Museum of Art, Alexandria, LA, Curator: Alyssa Fridgen
A Thousand Words, Acadiana Center of the Arts, Lafayette, LA, Curators: Mary Bate and Brian Guidry
- 2012 *Southern Open*, Acadiana Center of the Arts, Lafayette, LA, Juror: Rene Paul Barilleaux
The Fourth Annual Surreal Salon, Baton Rouge Gallery, Baton Rouge, LA, Juror: Casey Weldon
- 2011 *Gallery One Elleven Competition*, Gallery One Elleven, Leesville, LA, Juror: Chris King
The Third Annual Surreal Salon, Baton Rouge Gallery, Baton Rouge, LA, Juror: Chris Ryniak

COLLECTIONS

Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY
Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY
New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA
Block Museum of Art, Evanston, IL
Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans, LA
Alexandria Museum of Art, Alexandria, LA



GRANTS/AWARDS

2017 Joan Mitchell Painters & Sculptures Grant

RESIDENCIES

2020 Joan Mitchell Foundation, New Orleans, LA
2019 Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA
2019 Fountainhead Residency, Miami, FL
2017 Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture, Skowhegan, ME
2015 Vermont Studio Center, Johnson, VT

BIBLIOGRAPHY

2021 *Pat Phillips' Intricate, Layered Works on Paper @ M+B Gallery, Los Angeles, Juxtapoz Magazine, May 13*

2020 Morris, Bob. "Alone With Their Muses, Artists in Retreat Wonder if It's Too Much," *The New York Times*, May 8
Harden, Essence. "Pat Phillips at M+B", *Contemporary Art Review Los Angeles*, March 4

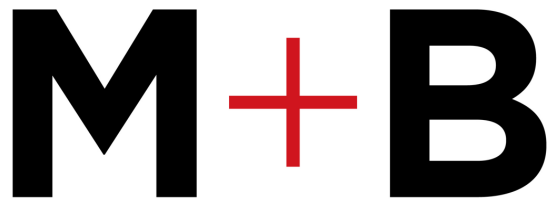
2019 Michelli, Thomas. "Painting Paradoxes of Family, Race, and Prison", *Hyperallergic*, March 9
"Pat Phillips Calls On His Own History To Spotlight Systematic Inequalities," *Art Of Choice*
"Visiting artist/lecturer, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA
"Former Pineville artist leaves mark at New York City's Whitney Museum" *The Town Talk*

2017 "Where Is Louisiana Art?" *Louisiana Cultural Vistas*

2016 "Jammin On Julia," *The New Orleans Advocate*

2015 "Pop Goes the Art," *Dig*, Baton Rouge
Day in the Lyfe

2013 *Transition*, Bloomington, IN



"Cool Town", *IND Monthly*, Lafayette

2010 *Gallery Insider*, Metairie, LA
Southern Pacific Forever

TEACHING / LECTURES / CURATORIAL

2020 Visiting artist/lecturer, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA

2019 Co-curator, Routine Malfunction, 1969 Gallery, New York, NY

2019 Curator, *All For You*, Catinca Tabacaru Gallery, New York, NY

2017 Artist/Live Painter, Live Graffiti Gallery, Buku Music + Art Project, New Orleans, LA

2016 Panel Speaker, Art + Place: Mural & Street Arts!, Studio BE/New Orleans Arts Council, New Orleans, LA

2015 Artist/Instructor, TedX Talks, University of Louisiana, Baton Rouge, LA

2014 Artist Visit/Lecturer, Xavier University, New Orleans, LA

2013-14 Curator, Aramenation, "A Starving Artist Experience", live exhibit, Freetown Studios, Lafayette, LA

2013 Interview (Pat Phillips, Mary Bate, Amie Rogers), KRVS, Classical/Public Service, Lafayette, LA

2013 Exhibit review, "Uncle Tom's Watermelon Rebellion of 89", Louisianaesthetic.com

2013 Visiting artist/instructor, Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts, Natchitoches, LA

2012-13 Art Instructor, George Rodrigue Foundation, Graffiti Art Workshop, New Orleans, LA

2012-16 Art Instructor, River Oaks Art Center, Art Studio, Alexandria, LA

2012 Artist/ Live Painter, Scion Skate the Rat Tour, Baton Rouge, LA

2010 Lecturer, the Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts, Natchitoches, LA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



PAT PHILLIPS
Untitled (Works on Paper)

May 15 – June 19, 2021

Opening Reception
Saturday, May 15 from 12 to 6 pm

M+B is pleased to present an exhibition of works by Pat Phillips. *Pat Phillips: Untitled (Works on Paper)* will be on view at **M+B Doheny** from May 15 through June 19, 2021, with an opening reception from noon until 6 pm.

Untitled (Works on Paper) takes an intimate look into Pat Phillips' drawing process. Relocating to Philadelphia in 2020, Phillips' use of various mark-making styles and his improvisational approach to image-making become a visual diary for accounts and his own ever-growing anxieties during the pandemic.

Pat Phillips was born in Lakenheath, England in 1987. His work was featured in the 2019 Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. Solo exhibitions include *ROOTS* (Antenna Gallery, New Orleans), *Told You Not to Bring That Ball* (Masur Museum of Art, Monroe) and *Summer Madness* (M+B, Los Angeles). This summer his work will be featured in *THIS IS AMERICA* at Kunstraum Potsdam in Germany. In 2017, he received a Joan Mitchell Painters & Sculptors Grant. Phillips has also participated in residencies at the Vermont Studio Center and Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture. His work can be found in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Block Museum of Art, Evanston, IL; and New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA, among others.

Location:	M+B Doheny , 470 North Doheny Drive, Los Angeles, California 90048
Show Title:	<i>Pat Phillips: Untitled (Works on Paper)</i>
Exhibition Dates:	May 15 – June 19, 2021
Opening Reception:	Saturday, May 15, 12 – 6 pm
Gallery Hours:	Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm

For inquiries please contact info@mbart.com.

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JUXTAPOZ

Art & Culture

Pat Phillips' Intricate, Layered Works on Paper @ M+B Gallery, Los Angeles

M+B Gallery Doheny // May 15, 2021 - June 19, 2021

May 13, 2021 | in Painting



It's incredible the amount of detail and pressure of layering that Pat Phillips puts into a piece of paper. It's almost as if eras and decades of influences and subconscious thoughts on each work, perhaps why he wanted to showcase a drawing show of works on paper as his first solo show since relocating to Philadelphia in 2020. M+B Gallery, where *Pat Phillips: Untitled (Works on Paper)* will be on view at their Doheny space from May 15 through June 19, 2021, mentions an underlying anxiety of the pandemic as the backdrop of this work. And you can tell: in re-thinking our relationship to each other and ourselves during the last year, there is a sense that we all combed through our memory bank for a mixture of worry and nostalgia.

Yet it's not just about the pandemic, or those thoughts of collective unease through sickness. This show is like a visual diary of a year; almost like Pat created works based on the day's news, or the innocuous act of binge-watching culture going by. When I saw *Wearing a mask at the bar in Port Richmond might get you beat up*, with Moe from the Simpsons in the background and hyper-aware

stream of consciousness title, the thought-process becomes clear: these are the moments underneath the headlines that made our year. The past presidency made it difficult to navigate what was really happening in this country, and Pat's new drawings understand that there are so many layers to the complicated process of both having your world slow down whilst simultaneously being thrown at hyper-speed with technology and pop-culture.

When Phillips work was selected into the 2019 Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art, it was moment that solidified a certain style of figurative art that was born from graffiti but had moved into a completely new realm. Pat said of his work, "My work explores my personal experiences, while correlating ideas between culture and subculture," and with *Untitled (Works on Paper)*, the balance between both elements is as clear as ever. —*Evan Pricco*



M+B

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PAT PHILLIPS *Summer Madness*

February 15 – March 14, 2020

Opening Reception

Saturday, February 15 from 6 to 8 pm



M+B is pleased to present *Summer Madness*, an exhibition of new paintings and works on paper by Pat Phillips, the artist's first solo show with the gallery and in Los Angeles. The exhibition runs from February 15 through March 14, 2020, with an opening reception on Saturday, February 15, from 6 to 8 pm.

I spent the early part of my childhood split between California and Louisiana. I was probably playing with my Hot Wheels when the city of Los Angeles, located an hour away, was burning in 1992.

Summer Madness is a series of works evoking the connection between sweltering heat and aggression, hostility and proximity to the "other." While media has always depicted the imagery of events such as Hurricane Katrina, the Rodney King verdict, or a mere Jordan shoe release, we often

forget the nuances of these dynamics in relation to the proverbial powder kegs of our political and social climate. Because of this, our accounts can become somewhat fantastical.

Whether cloaked in complicity, fear, ignorance or desperation, it is the subtle interactions between not only different social groups, but also within our own communities, that often lead to these precarious results.

Pat Phillips was born in Lakenheath, England in 1987. Relocating to Louisiana as a young child, he spent his early teenage years painting and photographing boxcars in a small town. His work was featured in the 2019 Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. Solo exhibitions include *ROOTS* (Antenna Gallery, New Orleans, LA), *Told You Not to Bring That Ball* (Masur Museum of Art, Monroe, LA) and *SubSuperior* (Catinca Tabacaru Gallery (New York, NY). Phillips has participated in residencies at the Vermont Studio Center and Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture. In 2017, he received a Joan Mitchell Painters & Sculptors Grant. His work can be found in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; Block Museum of Art, Evanston, IL; and New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA, among others.

Location:	M+B , 612 North Almont Drive, Los Angeles, California 90069
Show Title:	<i>Pat Phillips: Summer Madness</i>
Exhibition Dates:	February 15 – March 14, 2020
Opening Reception:	Saturday, February 15, 6 – 8 pm
Gallery Hours:	Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm, and by appointment

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

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Contemporary
Art Review

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Pat Phillips at M+B

March 4, 2020

Text by Essence Harden



Pat Phillips' solo exhibition, *Summer Madness*, at M+B (his first in Los Angeles), is a sensory visualization of national and intimate combustion. The madness Phillips offers comes from the heat raised by the summer's high sun and the flare in temperaments that historically follow (the summers of 1919, 1963, 1965, and 1992 were especially key years for America). The ills and pleasures of summer—the site of both leisurely consumption and bloodied injustices—are juxtaposed in

these works on canvas and paper. By arranging moments of gaiety amongst tensions in iconography, Phillips' work reminds the viewer that pleasure is a murky circumstance.

Using acrylic, oil, colored pencil, and aerosol paint, Phillips offers graphic and raw portraits of scenes from his home states of Louisiana and California. In the press release, he names urban rebellions, instances of anti-black police brutality, and government neglect, placing them alongside more private and interpersonal upheavals—all of which harbor summer's more blissful moments. In *I Got Some Lucas Candy From the Ice Cream Man / Hard Head Makes Soft Ass* (2020), an ice cream truck appears in the background, behind a pale hand with red nails holding a winding brown belt, seemingly ready to snap at someone or something that remains unseen. In *Paid In Dade* (2019), a stream of light envelops an open brown hand that

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has just let go of dice that fall to the cement below, daring to settle on a number, as a murder of crows from *Dumbo* gawk at the scene before them. In *Rumpus Room* (2019), the swell of heat pushes through the bare and sweat-laden feet and hands of brown limbs arranged over a Twister mat.

Most interestingly, in *Rumpus Room*, Phillips' places a crouched white woman laughing upward at the pretzeled figure on the Twister rings, the woman appearing much smaller in perspective. The scene utilizes the aesthetics of the late 1950s or early 1960s—the crouched woman wears cigarette pants, a cardigan, and sports a flick-up hairdo— placing her in a moment of political tumult and interracial strife. Thus, the rebellions across American cities by the masses of the black populace in 1963 and '64 and the accompanying demand for equity become the backdrop for this seemingly innocuous circumstance. Further, Phillips' arrangement of characters in *Rumpus Room* highlights the dubious relation between white pleasure and black movement, where objecthood follows the colossal brown appendages as sure as delight rests on the white subject's face.

Phillips locates the precarity of summer bliss within a society that finds itself im/exploding. Yet in Los Angeles, where warming months leak into every season, the fury of heat seems particularly present in a climate of widening disenfranchisement, disregard, and ever building tensions between what was, who remains, and the bulldozers which surround them. The intense orange glow of the sun is a constant color scheme throughout Phillips' paintings. The sun, that along with its many graces, is also the sovereign of ferocity showing up in the bullets of LAPD or the decay that encompasses Skid Row and the rest of the forgotten urbanscape. Phillips, then, presents us with a type of social order: one which utilizes beaming heat as a technology of social communion and collapse.

Pat Phillips: Summer Madness runs from February 15th–March 14th, 2020 at M+B (612 N. Almont Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90069).

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PAT PHILLIPS CALLS ON HIS OWN HISTORY TO SPOTLIGHT SYSTEMIC INEQUITIES

SEPTEMBER 26, 2019 | MARIA VOGEL

PAT PHILLIPS' work is full of multifaceted elements, both in styling and meaning. Phillips, who grew up primarily in a small town in Louisiana, found his way to art through general cultural references. He embraces this entry point, creating paintings that discuss the Americana subculture, as well as the current social and political threads running through American culture. Phillips had a stand-out work at this year's WHITNEY BIENNIAL, a large scale mural symbolizing incarceration, the insulation of suburbia, and the U.S.–Mexico border.



**When did art first enter into your life?
When did it become something that you
decided to pursue seriously?**

I've always been into drawing. I guess my earliest memory, is my dad would draw cartoon characters for me and my brother. We'd bring him one of our Ninja Turtles and he'd crank out a drawing on a poster-board for us. From there, I started making my own comic books with friends, then started writing graffiti around 13.

I'd like to say 19-20, when I started college, but honestly, I spent most of that time I painting graffiti. Probably when I dropped out of school a few years later was when I really started taking painting "seriously".

**How does your upbringing play a role in
your work?**

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Being from a working middle class black family, art wasn't really a thing outside of comic books, cartoons, and clothing graphics. My mom was a huge Thomas Kinkadee and Norman Rockwell fan...so we had a few generic prints and collector plates, along with random prints of floral paintings and black baby angels in the bathroom. I remember watching QVC with her once and she asked me why I couldn't just paint things like Kinkadee haha.

While we lived in England, she amassed a collection Lladro' figurines and was always collecting stuff. Obviously, none of this would be considered "high art", but this is what you see in middle American households. I think at an early age, it taught me to appreciate the sentimental value of objects and looking at pictures.

In the paintings, my interest in cultural and subcultural Americana, is not only a way to have more inclusive conversations through recognizable imagery, but a way to address our own ignorance.

Truth is, I grew up in the deep south in the 90s, so I find myself looking back and processing a lot of things that at the time, seemed pretty normal.



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Are aspects of your work autobiographical?

Of course, even though the work is typically addressing a larger idea, at its core, there is usually a personal narrative being told in some capacity.

What is a typical day like in your studio?

I work on multiple things at a time. I usually have a few paintings going, while having paper spread out amongst the floor. I have a real issue with waste. So generally, my sketches and works on paper are comprised of over mixed paints from my larger works. This actually helps free up my process, as 1

What other artists working today most inspire you?

Trenton Doyle Hancock, Jonathan Lyndon Chase and Tschabalala Self are all amazing. The homies who I grew up painting trains with. Some of those guys are crusty...some of them are 40 hour a week got 2 kids and family type people, but nevertheless have been getting it in for 20 years.



Is there a certain emotion you want a viewer of your work to walk away feeling?

I want my viewer to be open to conversation. To be able to laugh sometimes, but also be able to look at their position within the painting. There is a level of nuance within the work that will allow the viewer to immediately see what they want, while forcing them to walk away with something that might not be as easy to digest. They will either see themselves within the faceless limbs or as the voyeuristic outsider.

The emotional prescription is unique to each individual. I look at some of my own pieces and feel empowerment, while I'm sure others might sense fear or aggression. It's complicated...like the OJ verdict.

You've had some landmark moments this year, from painting a mural in The Whitney Biennial, your first solo exhibition in New York, and being included in Punch, the standout group show at Jeffrey Deitch LA which fellow artist Nina Chanel Abney curated. What have these experiences been like?

I remember sending Rujeko Hockley and Jane Panetta my

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mock up sketch, which consisted of some foam-core and essentially a napkin sketch of the mural image and thinking to myself, "These people are going to freak out when they see this crap!" I've been making work for nearly 10 years now, but it was definitely the first time that I was thinking, "What did I get myself into."

Despite working from my small town in Louisiana (I moved last year), it's been good. Coming from a graffiti background and then being asked to create a site specific piece for the Whitney, you definitely create this idea in your head as to how things have to go. Sure, there's a level of bureaucracy that can be annoying, but seeing their sense of trust in my process and work was dope.

As I mentioned earlier, I feel like I'm still learning and figuring out my own work everyday, so it's just been exciting to be apart of the conversation.

What's next for you?

Going to be hiding out at the Fine Arts Work Center in Massachusetts for the next 7 months. I have a show at M+B gallery in February.

At the end of every interview, we like to ask the artist to recommend a friend whose work you love for us to interview next. Who would you suggest?

CARL JOE WILLIAMS

M+B

Town Talk.

Former Pineville artist leaves mark at New York City's Whitney Museum

By Melinda Martinez | July 11, 2019

After a journey nearly 20 years in the making, former Pineville graffiti artist Pat Phillips' work is on display in the Whitney Biennial 2019 at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City.

"My mom thought it would be a good idea if I maybe started painting on canvas," said Phillips in an email. He is in Miami, where he is doing an art residency at Fountainhead Studios.

"So she actually bought me my first few canvases from Big Lots and I started making paintings. That was around 2005."

"His parents always supported his desire to become an artist," said Jeanie Basco, local artist and retired Pineville High School art teacher. Phillips was an art student of Basco's at Pineville High before he graduated in 2006.



"He was the first and only UPM (Urban Paint Master) I ever taught. He won the Art Award for Senior Showcase voted on by the faculty and students."

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Phillips said UPM was a "small graffiti crew" he started in 2000 with friends he had from junior high until high school.

As a Pineville High student, Basco said, Phillips designed the scrapbook cover for the Youth Art Council of America.

He's come a long way since then.

Phillips, 32, is among the 75 artists chosen to participate in the exhibit, which features media of painting, sculpture, installation, film and video, photography, performance and sound. The exhibit runs until Sept. 22.

Artist Pat Phillips, originally from Pineville, La., was commissioned by the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City to paint a mural, "Untitled (Don't Tread On Me)" at the museum. Phillips has paintings that are part of the Whitney Biennial 2019 at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City. Two of those paintings were painted at the River Oaks Arts Center in downtown Alexandria. The exhibit runs until Sept. 22.

"Two of the paintings I have in the Whitney Biennial were actually painted at River Oaks (Arts Center in downtown Alexandria)," said Phillips. The paintings are titled "Mandingo/Don't Tread On Me" and "The Farm."

This is Phillips' first time to exhibit at the Whitney.

"I mean, I think statistically speaking, you have better chances of winning a Grammy than showing in the Whitney Biennial," said Phillips jokingly.

This opportunity came about when Whitney curators Jane Panetta and Rujeko Hockley reached out to Phillips about doing a studio visit at the Joan Mitchell Foundation in New Orleans from which he received a Painters & Sculptors Grant.

Panetta and Hockley had been "visiting artists over the past year in search of the most important and relevant work," According to the Whitney's website.

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"A few months later, they asked if I would be interested in being a part of the 2019 Whitney Biennial," stated Phillips.

"Jane had seen a project I did in New York at SPRING/BREAK Art Show in 2018."

According to the Whitney Museum of Art's website, "The 2019 Biennial takes the pulse of the contemporary artistic moment."

Introduced in 1932 by the museum's founder, Gretrude Vanderbilt Whitney, the Biennial claims to be "the longest-running exhibition in the country to chart the latest developments in American art."

How does Phillips feel about exhibiting at the Whitney?

"It feels good," Phillips said. "I mean, dropping out of school at 22, selling paintings at the Alexandria ArtWalk for \$75, \$100 and working at Popeyes in 2008. I didn't even know what the Whitney Museum of American Art was. Literally 10 years after having my first art show, I'm not only asked to show my paintings there, but they also want me to paint a large mural. Definitely, not what I was expecting."

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"The only other museum exhibit I've had has been at the Masur Museum of Art in Monroe," Phillips added. "That was in 2017."

Phillips said his work is in the permanent collections of the Alexandria Museum of Art, The Ogden Museum of Art in New Orleans and the Block Museum of Art at Northwestern State University in Evanston, Illinois.

"I have a few future museum projects in the works and will actually have work on display at the Ogden Museum in the coming months," he said.

"The Farm" by artist Pat Phillips is among those hanging in the Whitney Biennial 2019 at the Whitney Museum of Art in New York City.

Phillips said he attended exhibit openings at River Oaks beginning around 2009. There he met the former River Oaks artistic director Preston Gilchrist who, he said, helped him to navigate the "art world."

"I'd show up to his office almost weekly just to talk about what I was doing and what my plans were. We'd joke around a lot, but it wasn't unlike him to be blunt and straight forward when talking about the realistic truths of being an artist. That was extremely helpful."

Phillips moved to Lafayette for a time but later returned to Alexandria. He was offered studio space at River Oaks by executive director Rachael Dausat and current artistic director Aubrey Bolen while he taught at the center's summer camp.

"The pace can be a bit slower at River Oaks, at least compared to other art residencies or spaces I've worked in, but they really allowed me to do my thing," he stated.

Phillips said he would stay at the center for 3-4 days straight "just painting (spray painting)." He might have broken protocol but Dausat and Bolen were happy he was "cranking out work and utilizing the facility to the fullest."

Phillips was also commissioned to do a mural at the Tamp & Grind Coffee Shop in downtown Alexandria by the late owner Jeff Phillips — no relation.

Amanda Phillips, the wife of Jeff Phillips, said Pat was commissioned to do the mural around 2013 when the coffee shop expanded into its new space.

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A booth was located next to Pat's mural but Amanda moved it to protect the mural. She plans to install a protective covering over it.

Phillips used to hang out at the former House of Java, which is now Tamp & Grind, and the other former House of Java location which was located on Jackson Street Extension

"A lot of kids skate around there and that's pretty much the subculture I come from," stated Phillips. "I started skating around 1998 so I had friends who worked and skated around downtown, so I've been hanging around that area for nearly 20 years."

Lately, Phillips has been doing a lot of traveling.

"I'll be in New York next month, then I'll be back in Massachusetts living there for another seven months," he said. Phillips had moved to Massachusetts last year where he has been working on his New York solo show which opened in February.

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Whitney Museum of American Art

WHITNEY BIENNIAL 2019 MAY 17–OCT 27, 2019

The Whitney Biennial is an unmissable event for anyone interested in finding out what's happening in art today. Curators Jane Panetta and Rujeko Hockley have been visiting artists over the past year in search of the most important and relevant work. Featuring seventy-five artists and collectives working in painting, sculpture, installation, film and video, photography, performance, and sound, the 2019 Biennial takes the pulse of the contemporary artistic moment. Introduced by the Museum's founder Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney in 1932, the Biennial is the longest-running exhibition in the country to chart the latest developments in American art.

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HYPERALLERGIC

Painting Paradoxes of Family, Race, and Prison

Through his father's profession as a corrections officer, Pat Phillips has found a pictorial strategy for probing the racial chasms of the justice system, and by inference, everyday life.

Thomas Micchelli | March 9, 2019



Pat Phillips is a 32-year-old painter who has shot straight to the 2019 Whitney Biennial seemingly out of nowhere, an enviable feat in anybody's book.

Yet his work possesses none of the mannerisms you'd associate with breakneck institutional recognition. It's not overtly political; its technological profile is nonexistent, and while it is rooted in graffiti, street art is present only as a background echo, at least in the work found in SubSuperior at Catinca Tabacaru — his first solo exhibition in a New York gallery, and only his second appearance in the city since last year's SPRING/BREAK Art Show.

There is a sprayed drawing of a van marked "Rapides Parish Police [St]ate Inmate Labor" on the west wall of Catinca Tabacaru's front room, and a cramped installation in the back, but the majority the exhibition is paint on canvas, pictures of disembodied hands, legs, and feet engaged in various forms of menial work.

The show's press release takes the form of an artist's statement, in which Phillips writes:

I grew up in a middle-class suburb among four other black families. Relatively blue collar, many of our parents worked in the few local industries in and around town. Out of the folks who looked like myself, we had a bus driver, janitor, factory worker, a Baptist preacher/lawyer, and my dad...a Corrections Officer at the local prison.

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It is through his father's profession — the starkest form of adaption to the white power structure — that Phillips finds a pictorial strategy for probing the racial chasms of the justice system, and by inference, everyday life. That his father worked in Louisiana, the home of the infamous Angola maximum security prison (officially known as the Louisiana State Penitentiary), only exacerbates the psychological disconnect expressed in these works.

In a review of the memoir *Solitary: Unbroken by Four Decades in Solitary Confinement. My Story of Transformation and Hope* by former Angola inmate Albert Woodfox, published this week in *The New York Times*, Dwight Garner notes:



The “legacy of slavery” was everywhere at Angola, Woodfox writes. When he arrived it was segregated. White prisoners mostly worked indoors while the black prisoners worked the fields, often cutting sugar cane under the supervision of guards with shotguns.

If not for the image of the Rapides Parish prison van that Phillips spray-painted across the wall, however, there is little indication that what is being depicted here is the forced labor of black men by the state. In the front room, where four canvases glow with sunny swaths of yellow, boots are polished, cheeks are lathered and shaved, roadside litter is cleared, a grave is dug. At first glance, the paintings seem like musings on the more mundane aspects of black life in the South.



But then you look again, and the sunny yellows turn rank, like grease in the searing heat. The perspective becomes vertiginous. The stylistic shifts within a single painting — from spray-painted shadows to penciled-in cigarette butts to roughly brushed blue jeans with sgraffito seams (“In the Desert They Don’t Remember Your Name,” 2018) — feel just this side of chaotic.

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As the artist's dirt-under-the-fingernails aesthetic sinks in, the specific ways that the imagery relates to the prison industrial complex — which were outlined during my visit by the gallery's Associate Director, Raphael Guilbert — become a powerful subtext for the conflicts undergirding the work, even as the actual connections remain latent.

While there are clues to the imagery's origins — in "Induction Cut" (2018), tattooed hands reach through prison bars to shave their client, an African American wearing a blue uniform that, in conjunction with the red-and-white striped barber cape, evokes the American flag — much of the symbolism feels personal and even impenetrable: the sneakers revealing bare feet like a radiograph ("In the Desert ...") or the three little girls walking in a funeral procession across a flower-spangled hill ("DIGGERS / The Procession," 2018).

The absence of an encumbering context frees the iconographic details (heightened by the shifting styles, which serve to isolate and individuate them) to generate open-ended implications and push into wider arenas. You don't need to know that the gleaming, jet-black boots in "SUPERIOR" (2018) belong to a prison guard to discern the discomfiting power dynamics at play in the work. Nor do you need to know that the title of the painting derives from Murray's Superior Hair Dressing Pomade, a product tailored to the African American market since the 1920s, to apprehend the racial complexities that Phillips has built into the image.



The tin of pomade — gripped by a hand thrusting forward from the canvas's left edge, just above the boots — here doubles as a tin of shoe polish, with only the word "Superior" visible. Phillips parodies the image on the pomade lid by painting a trio of African Americans (man, woman, and child) with featureless white faces save for their smiling, lipstick-red lips.

The combination of signifiers calls to mind a range of associations, from the subservient jobs deemed suitable for African Americans during Hollywood's "golden age," to the pressures to conform to white expectations as a prerequisite for navigating the nation's political, social, and economic hierarchies. The word "Superior" inescapably evokes white supremacy, a notion underscored by SubSuperior, the title of the exhibition.

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These hierarchies are made palpable in the gallery's back room, where an actual (non-functioning) industrial outhouse is jammed into a corner, signifying the division between homeowners and the workers who aren't allowed to use the bathrooms of the houses they're fixing. (The same outhouses appear in the background of "DIGGERS / The Procession," towed by a white prison van identified only by the gold sheriff's star on its side.)

The paintings at times display a hint of rebellion — in "Induction Cut," a tiny drop of blood falls from the tip of the straight razor hovering above the throat of the uniformed black man, whose lathered beard and scalp turn his head almost completely white — while the deep horizons in "Untitled (a horse with no name)" (2019) and "In the Desert They Don't Remember Your Name" (both apparent references to the 1972 folk-rock song, "A Horse with No Name," by a band called, tellingly, America) beckon toward freedom.

With *SubSuperior*, Phillips has transmuted his first-person account of racial paradoxes and inequities into an array of metaphors articulating a deeply felt protest, devoid of preachments and slogans. It is an insinuating vision, at once fierce and restrained, whose system of indirection catches us from behind, tripping up our assumptions and cutting into our complacency like broken glass.

SubSuperior

Pat Phillips

15 February — 31 March 2019

New York, NY, February 15, 2018: I grew up in a middle-class suburb among four other black families. Relatively blue collar, many of our parents worked in the few local industries in and around town. Out of the folks who looked like myself, we had a bus driver, janitor, factory worker, a Baptist preacher/lawyer, and my dad...a Corrections Officer at the local prison.

SubSuperior is a narrative exploring my own life, as well as the experiences of others stuck between racial and social classes. In an era that conveys progress, but only demonstrates marginal economic advancement, the struggles of the nuclear black family can create an illusion that things are better for everyone. Between the, “Y’all made it, so can everyone else” and the “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” mentality that is whole-heartedly regurgitated within the working middle class, many can simply overlook the systems that help maintain the standard and substandard of living.

Bounded by historical empathy and adversity, one must constantly reexamine his or her position within the Subsuperior. With limited opportunities, this can be the difference between being a sufferer within the system or those enlisted to uphold its practices.

Pat Phillips (b.1987, Lakenheath, England)

Lives and works in Louisiana

Pat Phillips spent his teenage years painting and photographing boxcars in Central Louisiana. Even as his studio practice evolved and the dialogue around his work became more complex, Phillips continued painting graffiti. He often credits these experiences as the catalyst leading to the poignant scenarios he paints into his pictures.

While Phillips’ works tell stories from his personal narrative of growing up in suburbia – those encounters and mischief – they connect ideas of culture and subculture. He touches on the social, historical, and individual, aiming to engage the viewer through mundane and sometimes satirical subject matter. His crude aesthetic merges race, landscape, and contemporary Americana into a mythological narrative exploring a black perspective. Not intending to always equate his experiences with the seriousness of his subject matter, Phillips uses a common language to examine society’s many perceptions.