

# M+B

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## MARK THOMAS GIBSON *Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood*

October 23 - December 4, 2021

### Opening Reception

Saturday, October 23 from 6 to 8 pm  
612 N Almont Drive, Los Angeles

**M+B** is pleased to announce *Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood*, an exhibition of new works by Mark Thomas Gibson. This is Gibson's second solo exhibition with the gallery, and will run from October 23 through December 4, 2021. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, October 23, from 6:00 to 8:00pm.

“Just when you thought it was safe...” In Mark Thomas Gibson's work, America's past just will not stay dead, even if it might choose to play dead for a news cycle or two. In our collective longing for respite, for closure, we might hold a premature victory parade, or a premature funeral, we might wave a flag or post a placard or plant a sun-faced daisy. But all the time, whether or not we'll admit it, we know that a sequel is coming soon, another chapter in the unending saga of white supremacy. In the background, we might glimpse a white-robed figure slipping into a manhole, we might hear the faint scritch of white-gloved fingernails against splintering wood, stifled crunching noises behind drawn white curtains. We might notice that the face of the daisy is suspiciously blank, the tips of its petals pointed like little white hoods, we might start to wonder whether even our hopefulness is rooted in something more sinister.

Indeed, a certain degree of paranoia ends up being a useful coping mechanism for approaching this body of work. We might be drawn to a posy of hothouse flowers, only to find ourselves questioning what background this decorative overlay is meant to cover up, whose hands planted and tended these painstakingly cultivated blooms. To the extent that our ideas about beauty, heroism, patriotism, optimism, progress – are received ideas, from whom did we receive these ideas in the first place...and in furtherance of whose master plan?

Even Gibson's images with the greatest graphic punch reveal strategic layering, conflicting registers, backstories and secret histories. The present reveals itself as a paper-thin scrim pasted over a seething, steaming morass of unacknowledged and unexpurgated sin. Corroded, corrosive backdrops eat away at the certainty of the line; a public pool – a perpetual site of racialized contestation – turns out to be 1,492 feet deep; Biden's victory procession (in a knowing nod to Ensor) is relegated to the background of a parade of horrors with a hooded figure (perhaps a self-portrait?) clinging precariously to a perch in the margins. With its startlingly cropped and layered images, Gibson's *A Klansman's Progress* – a update on Hogarth's *Rake's Progress* – pulls us into the gravitational force of the narrative even when we know how the story will end. We have to look, and it is testament to the power of Gibson's vision that we keep on looking.

— Monica Youn, 2021

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**Mark Thomas Gibson** (b. 1980, Miami, FL) received his BFA from The Cooper Union in 2002 and his MFA from Yale University School of Art in 2013. Gibson is the 2021 recipient of the Pew Fellowship from the Pew Center for Arts and Heritage in Philadelphia, and also received the Lewis Center for the Arts Hodder Fellowship at Princeton University. The artist's work was most recently on view in *Shifting Gaze: A Reconstruction of the Black and Hispanic Body in Contemporary Art*, Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art at Virginia Beach, and *THIS IS AMERICA* at Kunstraum Potsdam in Germany. Other recent group show venues include the Contemporary Art Museum, University of South Florida, Tampa; Gladstone Gallery, New York, and Jeffrey Deitch in New York. In 2016, Gibson co-curated the traveling exhibition *Black Pulp!* with William Villalongo at the Yale School of Art. The show examined evolving perspectives of Black identity in American culture and history from 1912 to 2016, and garnered reviews in *The New York Times* and *Art in America*. Gibson's first publication, *Some Monsters Loom Large*, was released in 2016. His second book *Early Retirement* was published a year later with Edition Patrick Frey in Zurich and was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Mark Thomas Gibson teaches at Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Temple University and lives and works in Philadelphia, PA.

Location: **M+B**, 612 North Almont Drive, Los Angeles, California 90069  
Show Title: *Mark Thomas Gibson: Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood*  
Exhibition Dates: October 23 - December 4, 2021  
Opening Reception: Saturday, October 23, 6 – 8 pm  
Gallery Hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 10 am – 6 pm

For all inquiries, please contact [info@mbart.com](mailto:info@mbart.com).