

METRO PICTURES

JIM SHAW

November 2, 2017 - January 9, 2018

Jim Shaw's exhibition of paintings, drawings, sculpture, and video at Metro Pictures is the influential artist's first in New York since his 2015 New Museum survey "The End is Here," where he exhibited his idiosyncratic works alongside his exalted collection of thrift store paintings (first shown at Metro Pictures in 1991) and densely accumulated oddball religious ephemera. An icon of the Los Angeles art scene, he is associated with a generation of artists that includes Mike Kelley, John Miller, and Tony Oursler, all of whom studied at CalArts in the 1970s.



Miss Universe, 2017. Acrylic on muslin, 40 x 53 1/4 inches.

Rendered in exquisite detail, Shaw's virtuosic work combines his analysis of the political, social and spiritual histories of the United States with contemplative reflections of his own psyche. For more than three decades he has examined art history, comic books, subcultural undergrounds and consumer products—to name only a few of his wide-ranging fields of interest—to articulate a distinct visual language that charts the country's ever-shifting sociopolitical landscape.

The paintings in this exhibition incorporate symbols and characters of the past to comment on our fraught present. Using imagery drawn from Old Testament stories, pagan myths and satirical cartoons, Shaw relies on his encyclopedic knowledge to visualize our common vernacular. His layered symbology reads like an exaggerated mirror of our hyper-mediated, "post-truth" reality. These allusions to biblical prophecies and pulp imagery speak to the effects this bellicose time has on our collective subconscious. Shaw's *Miss Universe* refers to the mythological tale of the rape of Europa, famously depicted by Titian and countless artists throughout history, in which the titular Phoenician woman is abducted by Zeus in disguise as a bull. In Shaw's interpretation of the scene, Zeus appears as an alpha male centaur bull wearing a modern business suit and checking his wristwatch. Walking along a beach he approaches Europa, who has washed ashore wearing a pageant dress and a Miss Universe sash, her face obscured by a swirling galaxy divinely emanating from her torso.

The first comprehensive presentation in Los Angeles of Shaw's work is on view at the Marciano Art Foundation through January 13. "Michigan Stories: Mike Kelley and Jim Shaw" will be on view November 18 through February 25, 2018, at the Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University. On December 6, Shaw's band D'red D'warf will perform at Soundscape Park as part of Art Basel Miami Beach's public programming. He has had additional one-person shows at Mass MoCA, North Adams, Massachusetts; BALTIC Centre for the Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK; Kunstmuseum Luzern, Switzerland; CAPC Musée d'art Contemporain, Bordeaux; and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. His work has been included in the Venice Biennale, Whitney Biennial, SITE Santa Fe Biennial and the Biennale of Sydney.