

DRAW THEM IN PAINT THEM OUT

TRENTON DOYLE HANCOCK CONFRONTS PHILIP GUSTON

This exhibition brings together the work of Philip Guston and Trenton Doyle Hancock, two trailblazing American artists of different generations—one Jewish, one Black—whose lives, both personal and creative, share unexpected and often remarkable connections. The installation reflects the circuitous conversation that Hancock has sustained with Guston for the past thirty years. It highlights both artists’ investigations of the entwined legacies of white supremacy, racism, and antisemitism in the United States in ways that are emotionally raw and darkly humorous.

Philip Guston (1913–1980) was a fixture of the New York art world who is now one of the most revered painters of the twentieth century. He is perhaps best known for his depictions of cartoonish Ku Klux Klansmen, a controversial series he began in the late 1960s as racial tension roiled across America. His provocative images, which used satire to defy bigotry, resonate with renewed urgency today. Trenton Doyle Hancock (born in 1974) is a multifaceted artist based in Houston, Texas. He similarly draws on the language of comics to challenge and comment on the American condition, notably the pernicious and persistent threat of racism, past and present.

Hancock’s paintings are populated by a vibrant cast of mythical characters. Some of these figures are stand-ins for the artist himself, a practice that Guston likewise embraced. In many of Hancock’s works, a Black superhero named Torpedoboy, one of his long-standing avatars, meets Guston’s alter ego, the Klansman. Hancock confronts his artistic forefather and examines their respective motivations for grappling with white supremacy. Today, amid an unprecedented rise in anti-Black and antisemitic violence, Hancock endeavors to “show that hate organizations like the Klan still exist, congregating and operating in plain sight.”

Draw Them In, Paint Them Out is as much the story of one artist’s relationship to another as it is a broader dialogue about the role of art in the pursuit of social justice. We look to these artists to help us confront the past as we turn to face an uncertain future.

Rebecca Shaykin
Curator

▶ 100, 101 AD 200

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▶ Insights from the artist; the exhibition curator; and Musa Mayer, Philip Guston’s daughter

AD Audio Descriptions that translate the visual into spoken word, designed for individuals who are blind or have low vision

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