

Hannah Black
HUSH MR GIANT

20 September - 1 November 2025
Private view: 19 September 2025, 6-8 pm

Arcadia Missa is pleased to announce Hannah Black's third solo exhibition at the gallery. Titled *HUSH MR GIANT*—an anagram of “human rights”—the show consists of six circular oil on canvas paintings, based on the rotating word-play disks in Duchamp's surrealist film *Anemic Cinema*, 1926.

The spiral text on each painting derives from six articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), contorted into nonsense poetry. “Everyone has the right...” becomes “even yearners to riot...”, and so on. This “sounds-like” process uses homophony to make associations between words. Homophonic connections that produce random meanings within a language are part of “the deposit, the alluvium, the petrification that is marked by the way a group handles its unconscious collective experience... the death of the sign it carries.” (Lacan, 1974). In our era, the Declaration's liberal vision of universal humanity—never real, but ideologically powerful—has been publicly slaughtered and replaced by an open doctrine of “might is right”.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was composed in 1948—shortly after the devastations of World War II and the Nazi genocide, the same year as the colonization of Palestine, and before the decolonization movements of the 1950s—by a committee led by the victorious Allied powers. Never legally binding and full of implicit assumptions of Western hegemony, the declaration outlined the basic rights supposedly afforded to all of humanity.

Seventy-seven years later, as the logic and actuality of genocide intensifies its grip over the combined and uneven suffering of the world, “humanitarian” values rain down as high-tech bombs and low-tech torture.

This mutilated promise of universality has its roots in the revolutions of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the radical potentials of which quickly calcified into new rationalizations of domination. Against this ruin, the paintings invoke surrealism as, in Suzanne Césaire's words, “the tightrope of our hopes” (*Tropiques*, 1943) stretching over the abyss of fascism. The inner freedom expressed by the surreal offers an escape from colonial rationality that persists, perhaps uselessly, despite attempts to brutalize life into submission.

Each painting is penetrated with nails and thread, delineating the astrological event chart of a historical revolution loosely corresponding to the article in question. (For example, Article 4, “no one shall be held in slavery or servitude”, is pierced by the Haitian revolution, and Article 13, “everyone has the right... to return to his country”, by the Great Palestinian Rebellion of 1936). The revolutions/rebellions are understood as historical symptoms of the collective psychosis of universal humanism. They act as reminders that rights are neither natural, nor altruistic ruling class affordances, but instead determined by the contingencies of struggle and power. determined by the contingencies of struggle and power.

Many thanks to Demi Latz, Claude Nouk, Samuel Palmieri and everyone at Arcadia Missa.

Text by Hannah Black

Hannah Black (b. 1981, Manchester, UK) is an artist and writer based between Montfort-sur-Argens, FR and New York, US. Black works across installation, painting, sculpture and video. Her artistic practice is driven by an inquiry into the boundaries and structures of human relationships, influenced by communist, psychoanalytic and black radical traditions.

Recent exhibitions include *The Directions*, Vleeshal, Middelburg (2025); *Marked by a Blank or Occupied by a Lie*, Octo, Marseille, FR (2024); *The Meaning of Life*, Art Gallery of York University, Toronto, CA (2022); *Wheel of Fortune*, gta exhibitions, ETH Zürich, Hönggerberg, CH (2021), amongst others. Black's works have been included in institutional group exhibitions at Kunsthalle Friart Fribourg, Fribourg, CH (2025); Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK (2024); Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, US (2022), amongst others.

Hannah Black's works are in major public collections including Tate, London (UK); FRAC Lorraine (FR); Mumok, Vienna (AT); Julia Stoschek Collection, Berlin (DE).



1. Hannah Black
No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (Algerian Revolution), 2025
Oil, cotton and nails on canvas
Ø 100 x 3 cm (Ø 39 3/8 x 1 1/8 inches)
2. Hannah Black
Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference (American Revolution), 2025
Oil, cotton and nails on canvas
Ø 100 x 3 cm (Ø 39 3/8 x 1 1/8 inches)
3. Hannah Black
No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms (Haitian Revolution), 2025
Oil, cotton and nails on canvas
Ø 100 x 3 cm (Ø 39 3/8 x 1 1/8 inches)
4. Hannah Black
Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to this country. (Great Palestinian Rebellion), 2025
Oil, cotton and nails on canvas
Ø 100 x 3 cm (Ø 39 3/8 x 1 1/8 inches)
5. Hannah Black
Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized (Chinese Communist Revolution), 2025
Oil, cotton and nails on canvas
Ø 100 x 3 cm (Ø 39 3/8 x 1 1/8 inches)
6. Hannah Black
Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law (French Revolution), 2025
Oil, cotton and nails on canvas
Ø 100 x 3 cm (Ø 39 3/8 x 1 1/8 inches)