

Mitchell-Innes & Nash is pleased to present an exhibition of new work by Los Angeles-based artist Karl Haendel at the gallery's Chelsea location at 534 West 26th Street. Titled *Masses & Mainstream*, this will be the artist's second solo exhibition with the gallery and will feature an installation of works on paper, ranging in scale from the monumental to the intimate.

While Karl Haendel's newest work covers a wide range of subject matter from a stack of lawnmowers to a portrait of Barbara Walters, the common thread that links these disparate images is a dialogue between memory, both personal and collective, and national identity. Many of the works on view are drawn from overlooked sources in contemporary American life—cultural leftovers the artist combs through and resuscitates in order to represent an alternate picture of American reality. Other works, like the aforementioned stack of lawnmowers, come from the artist's personal history and experiences—a once-submerged detail from his childhood home that has floated to the surface of recollection—that could also be read, more symbolically, as the paraphernalia of American comfort, excess and, perhaps even, of the endangered middle class.

In these latest works, Haendel examines various paradigms relating to power, privilege, masculinity and patriotism—all through the lens of an ever-shifting and highly polarized political landscape. In one work, Haendel depicts Richard Nixon's modest childhood home in Orange County, California, the home of the modern conservative movement, where the artist organized for Democratic candidates during the recent midterm elections. Layered on top of his drawing of Nixon's home are doodles made by his daughter in marker—a palimpsestic composition that not only pinpoints the home as the locus of childhood development but also as the structure, both physical and symbolic, that has underwritten the political, economic and social foundation of our society: the American dream.

This ideal and its promises, its perversions and its limitations, are recurring themes, both directly and indirectly, throughout Haendel's work. It is a narrative that, for many years, has succeeded in weaving our inherent differences—our separate histories, perspectives and biases—into a unified fabric of national identity. Karl Haendel's work, however, focuses on the unseen wefts and threadbare margins of this cultural apparatus, revealing not only its flaws but also what lies beyond the blanketing force of the masses and the mainstream.

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