



Gilbert & George, *SAC LOVE*, 2020. Mixed media, 89.37 x 124.8 inches (227 x 317 cm)

Gilbert & George
NEW NORMAL PICTURES
New York, W 22nd Street
September 9 – November 6, 2021

Opening reception: Thursday, September 9, 6–8 PM

Lehmann Maupin will present *NEW NORMAL PICTURES*, an exhibition of new work by the iconic London-based duo Gilbert & George. The exhibition marks the artists' seventh with the gallery and the debut of *NEW NORMAL PICTURES* in New York. This new series fully embodies the tenor of contemporary life, best described through the old punk adage "the day the world turned Day-Glo," with works rendered in an acidic color palette and with almost post-apocalyptic flare. Begun before the onset of the global pandemic and crystallized during the Covid-19 lockdowns in England, *NEW NORMAL PICTURES* reflects the reality of the world we live in today, from the endless refuse and litter of post-industrial life to the moments of sublime human connection and humor that can be found in even the darkest of times.

For over 50 years, Gilbert & George have lived and worked together in London's East End, subsuming their individual identities into a singular artistic persona. The neighborhood has served as both the backdrop of and subject matter for their art, bearing witness to the shifting sociopolitical and urban conditions of the area over many decades. Through imagery specific to London and the East End in particular, Gilbert & George create pictures that function as both a portrait and love letter to their city—and often reflect larger universal concerns. The works in *NEW NORMAL PICTURES* bring the uncanny to life, where brute realism is infused with the hallucinatory quality of dreams. Each picture is simultaneously too dark yet too bright, and the tonal contrasts seem to be at war with one another, with little to soften the bleak, urban other-worldliness of the compositions. By depicting precarious (often seemingly absurd) image-subject relationships, the artists create a discordant tone that heightens the overarching sense of drama, dark humor, and intrigue.

NEW NORMAL PICTURES offers a view of London in which everything is slightly off kilter, with the artists themselves pictured attempting to catch their balance or toppling over amidst an ever-shifting landscape. Litter, railings, drug bags, shovels, spades, and old trinkets become symbols of change, chaos, and disruption and function in tandem with the formal elements within each work. In *PUMA COURT* (2020), Gilbert & George are pictured in bright green suits and ties that stand out against the sickly yellow bricks and grey tonal ground and windows. The grime of the street and basement windows stands out due to stark contrast of greys, every smear, mark, and bit of residue made visible. The building windows are overlain with larger-than-life plastic zip bags—the kind that often hold drugs or other illegal substances. The closure of each bag is the same bright color as the artists’ suits, creating a formal and conceptual connection between their surreal scale and placement of both the bags and the artists themselves. The entire scene is bent in at the center, forcing the artists to “hang on” to the windowsills to keep from falling out of frame.

Since the summer of 1967, Gilbert & George have been travelling together on what they refer to as “a visionary and moral journey” that is often made on foot along the streets of London, or occasionally by bus to the city’s edges. The streets, alleys, and vistas portrayed in *NEW NORMAL PICTURES* offer the viewer a glimpse into some of their more recent excursions. The spaces they traverse are almost (but not quite) familiar, appearing normal at first glance but in fact revealed to be strange and skewed, with a touch melancholy. In *BATTLE ROAD* (2020), the artists are depicted in lime green suits on sidewalks that are tilting towards each other. At the center, swords and axes appear as emblems, with the background marked by violent metal fencing that feels almost cage-like. While the tilted road and fencing imply danger, the images of historic weaponry offer a touch of nostalgia for a popular, mythologized England of the distant past. Following the global political, social, and economic shifts that occurred during 2020, the title *NEW NORMAL PICTURES* both recognizes sentimentality for the familiar while acknowledging the fact that the world has irrevocably entered a “new normal.” Through their altered landscapes, Gilbert & George give visibility to things typically overlooked and discarded, creating a reversal of standard hierarchies as an emblem of our forever altered global reality.

About the Artist

Gilbert & George received their BFAs at the Munich Academy of Art, Germany, and Oxford Art School, England, respectively and received their MFAs from Saint Martin’s School of Art in London. Recent solo exhibitions of their work have been organized at Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo, Norway (2019); Reykjavic Art Museum, Reykjavic, Iceland (2019); Louis Vuitton Foundation, Paris, France (2019); Lehmann Maupin, Hong Kong (2019); Lehmann Maupin, Seoul, South Korea (2019); Helsinki Art Museum, Helsinki, Finland (2018); Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Salzburg, Austria (2018); Lehmann Maupin, New York, NY (2017); White Cube, London, United Kingdom (2017); Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest, Hungary (2017); Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania, Australia (2016); Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY (2015); Diechtorhallen, Hamburg, Germany (2011); the Kröller- Müller Museum, the Netherlands (2010); de Young museum, San Francisco, CA (2008), Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI (2008), Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY (2008); and the Tate Modern, London, United Kingdom (2007). Select group exhibitions featuring their work include *The World Exists To Be Put On Postcards: artists’ postcards from 1960 to now*, British Museum, London, United Kingdom (2019); *DOUBLES, DOBROS, PLIEGUES, PARES, TWIMS, MITADES*, The Warehouse, Dallas, TX (2017); *The Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition 2017*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, United Kingdom (2017); *Take Me (I’m Yours)*, Jewish Museum, New York, NY (2016); *A Journey Through London Subculture: 1980s to Now*, Institute of

Contemporary Art, London, United Kingdom (2013); *Regarding Warhol: Sixty Artists, Fifty Years*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY (2012); *ARTandPRESS*, Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin, Germany (2012); *The Original Copy: Photography of Sculpture 1839 to today*, Kunsthaus Zurich, Switzerland (2011); *BP British Art Displays 1500- 2009*, Tate Britain, London, United Kingdom (2009); and *Passports: Great Early Buys from the British Council Collection*, Whitechapel Gallery, London, United Kingdom (2009).

Their work is in numerous international public and private collections, including the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia; Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL; Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France; Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH; Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Bilbao, Spain; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland; Istanbul Modern Art Museum, Istanbul, Turkey; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, TX; Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Australia; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh, Scotland; National Museums, Liverpool, United Kingdom; National Museums, Holywood, Northern Ireland; North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC; Noveau Musée National de Monaco, Monaco; Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, Australia; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands; Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent, Belgium; and the Tate, London, United Kingdom.

Gilbert & George have received honorary Doctorates of Art from Plymouth University, United Kingdom (2013); Open University, Buckinghamshire, United Kingdom (2012); University of East London (2010); and London Metropolitan University (2008). They have received numerous awards, including the South Bank Award, London, and The Lorenzo il Magnifico Award, Florence, in 2007; the Special International Award, Los Angeles, in 1989, and most notably, the Turner Prize, United Kingdom, in 1986.

About Lehmann Maupin

Rachel Lehmann and David Maupin co-founded Lehmann Maupin in 1996 in New York. Since inception, Lehmann Maupin has served as a leading contemporary art gallery with locations in the U.S., Europe, and Asia. For over 25 years, Lehmann Maupin has been instrumental in introducing international artists in new geographies and building long-lasting curatorial relationships. Known for championing diverse voices, the gallery's program proudly features artists whose work challenges notions of identity and shapes international culture. Today, the gallery has locations in New York, Hong Kong, Seoul and London, as well as a team in mainland China. In the past year with growing opportunities in new markets, the gallery has opened seasonal spaces in Aspen, Palm Beach, Taipei, and Beijing.

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