

Press Release

Van Hanos

Twin

16 November – 21 January 2023

67 Lisson Street, London

Opening: 15 November, 6 – 8pm

For Van Hanos's first exhibition in London, the Marfa-based artist presents a series of new paintings, focusing exclusively, for the first time, on experimental figuration. In Hanos's ever-evolving practice, each exhibition is an extension from his previous body of work; his last presentation in New York (*Conditional Bloom* at Lisson Gallery, 2021) focused on multifarious abstractions of form, whereas now the artist applies himself to expanding our perception of the medium and traditions around figurative painting. In this new series, we see Hanos thinking about painting in a different way, liberating his and our own understanding of allegory and image, considering what makes portraiture a portrait, rather than just an illustration of a figure. Some paintings are intentionally conceived as portraits – formed through a deep and deliberate affection to capture the likeness of the person – whereas others are painted as symbols or vehicles for narratives.

Entitled *Twin*, the premise was born from a conversation between Hanos and his twin brother, sharing his initial vision for the gallery space, thinking of the trapezoid-like spaces as a pair, as well as marking this as the painter's second exhibition with Lisson. The notion of *twin*, rather than *twins*, also encourages reflections on the self, the singularity in the pair, which Hanos used as a springboard to explore with mirrors and echoes, focusing on the creation of images from other images.

Twins (all works 2022) is one painting in the exhibition (inspired by Sam Potthoff, 1979), depicting two sets of eyes in a black void. These eyes represent babies in the womb, with the dark background suggesting a body. Alongside this is *Erin Echo*, the title referring to the Narcissus myth from Ovid's 'Metamorphoses', the beautiful youth who rejected Echo and fell in love with his own reflection. The multi-layered, dense approach seen in this painting reveals how Hanos often approaches his work: superimposing ideas to create a new existence, one that is based on real people and places yet physically and digitally manufactured – making it both reality and fantasy.

Other works in the exhibition include *Archer, bow, lion, and whip*, two candid, tender figures that together create the shape of an arrow, serving as a contemporary personification of the goddess, Artemis; and *Offering*, presenting a woman in water below a pair of male twins modelled in sync – the setting inspired by pre-historic sites in The Lower Pecos Canyonlands in Marfa. Here, one of the male twins offers a small figure perched in his hand as a totem to the mountain, while the other gazes into the eyes of the mountain, as if depicting a waking dream.

Traditional portraits of two of Hanos's closest friends are also presented: *Portrait of Sam Salazar*, which is itself a vignette of Marfa given the subject's family lineage dates back to Marfa for c.10,000 years; and *David*, an intense, psychedelic portrait realised with the stylistic approach of Michelangelo's sculpture of *David* (c.1501) in mind – the lightbulb replacing the stone, the Globe as the head of Goliath.

The exhibition also features a new ceramic glazed sculpture, *Boy with Thorn*, portraying a wounded young boy crying, his tears reincarnated as a fountain. Raining down tequila (a drink typically produced and packaged in ceramic vessels), the sculpture serves as a dark tragicomedy on the ripple effects of substance abuse.

A series of smaller paintings interspersed across the galleries are presented as a fracture of the forms outlined in the larger works. If the larger paintings cycle through portraiture, allegory and the overlay of form, these smaller works feel like practice in process – academic sketches or studies where ideas are played out: depictions of thought.

About the artist

Van Hanos's approach to painting is best defined by its stylistic freedom and forsaking of particular modes or methods. Ranging from landscape to portraiture, beyond categorization as either figuration or abstraction, his work navigates perceptual shifts and thematic rupture. Hanos explores the tremendous range of possibilities within the human mind and experience, and his paintings can be created as meticulous oil renderings of images taken from photographs, with technical precision and photographic tendencies, or as sublime, abstracted amalgamations of past observations and ruminations, replete with internal references to other paintings or past subjects, and layered with meaning. Hanos's work always beckons the viewer to look closer — as what one first experiences is undoubtedly bound to shift upon continued investigation.

Van Hanos (born 1979) currently lives and works in Marfa, Texas. He has a MFA from Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD, USA (2001), and an MFA from the School of the Arts at Columbia University, New York, NY, USA (2010). Recent solo exhibitions include *Interiors* at Château Shatto, Los Angeles, CA, USA (2020); *Mommy's Boy* at Cleopatra's, New York, NY, USA (2017); *Late American Paintings* at Château Shatto, Los Angeles, CA, USA (2017); *Awake At The Funeral* at Tanya Leighton, Berlin, Germany (2017); *Van Hanos* at Parapet Real Humans, St. Louis, MO, USA (2017); *Intercalaris* at Rowhouse Project, Baltimore, MD, USA (2016); and *Van Hanos* at West Street Gallery, New York, NY, USA (2011). Selected group exhibitions include *A Cloth Over a Birdcage* at Château Shatto, Los Angeles, CA, USA (2019); *The Land That I Live In* at Matthew Brown, Los Angeles, CA, USA (2019); *Pine Barrens* at Tanya Bonakdar, New York, NY, USA (2018); *An Uncanny Likeness* at Simon Lee Gallery, New York, NY, USA (2017); *The Lazy Sunbathers* at Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf, Germany (2015); *The Ninth Season of The Artist's Institute with Carolee Schneemann* at The Artist's Institute, New York, NY, USA (2015); and *Call and Response* at Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York, NY, USA (2015). Paintings by Hanos were featured in the group exhibition, *The Rest*, at Lisson Gallery New York from January – February 2019, and his work was the subject of a solo presentation at [Lisson Gallery in East Hampton](#) in August 2020. His work is included in the permanent collection of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami.

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and promotes the work of more than 60 international artists across two spaces in London, three in New York, and one in Shanghai, as well as forthcoming galleries in Beijing and Los Angeles. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, John Latham, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. It still works with many of these artists as well as others of that generation from Carmen Herrera to the renowned estate of Leon Polk Smith.

In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors to the public for the first time, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. Since 2000, the gallery has gone on to represent many more leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller, Tatsuo Miyajima and Sean Scully. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Ryan Gander, Van Hanos, Hugh Hayden, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes, Wael Shawky and Cheyney Thompson.

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