

GAGOSIAN

Jordan Wolfson to Exhibit Works on Paper in Basel

Artist's Gagorian Debut, Opening June 12, Features Works from the *JFK Jr. Series*



Jordan Wolfson, *Untitled*, 2020, archival inkjet print with enamel paint and marker, in powder-coated aluminum artist's frame with decals, 41 × 45 × 3 inches (104.1 × 114.3 × 7.6 cm) © Jordan Wolfson

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NEW YORK, May 22, 2023—Gagosian is pleased to announce an exhibition of recent works on paper by Jordan Wolfson at the gallery in Basel. *Drawings*, the gallery's first exhibition of Wolfson's work since announcing its representation of the artist in 2022, features thirty-five framed works from the series *JFK Jr.* (2020–).

Pairing painted-over photographs of the late John Fitzgerald Kennedy Jr. with decals bearing the graphic image of a red rose and the forbidding slogan “Describing how a dog was slaughtered,” Wolfson juxtaposes and mischievously negates potent signifiers of optimism, infallibility, and love. Characterizing the late presidential scion as a celebrated but problematic harbinger of American neoliberalism, the artist transforms him, through brutally simple acts of defacement, from a member of the moneyed elite into an outsider figure, scrawling on his face in an echo of Groucho Marx's notorious greasepaint mustache. The works are in this sense also self-portraits of their maker as Little J., a college nickname that stood for “Little Jordan,” “Little Jerk,” or “Little Jew.”

Drawings is a relatively unassuming first project at Gagosian for Wolfson, who is known for using a range of mediums—including sculpture, installation, video, photography, digital animation, and performance—in a confrontational style and at spectacular scale. Employing a collage-like

methodology, he filters the evolving languages of online and broadcast media through digital and mechanical technologies to explore unsettling social and psychological themes. Wolfson's oeuvre is marked by the fusion of physical, virtual, and imaginary realms, and revolves around the projection of internal impulses onto constructed selves and scenarios. Focused on the disorienting power of the uncanny, his images and objects have a real and lasting emotional force.

The disturbing text of the stickers in the works on view in Basel represents the horror of destroying a consciousness and the heartbreak of denying love. Yet Wolfson insists that it is meant to elicit complex feelings, not merely to provoke, describing it as aiming for the devastating lyricism of Richard Brautigan's "Love Poem" (1967) ("it's so nice / to wake up in the morning / all alone / and not have to tell somebody / you love them / when you don't love them / any more"). Having begun the *JFK Jr.* series as one way to address the Trump phenomenon without picturing the progressive bête noire directly—positioning instead the altered JFK Jr. as his ideological opposite—Wolfson hopes that the drawings' relatively intimate scale when compared with many of his other works makes them accessible and, perhaps, heartbreaking.

Drawings precedes a major exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, in December 2023, and a larger presentation in Los Angeles in 2024. Gagosian will also exhibit two new wall works by Wolfson at Art Basel 2023 (June 15–18). From June 13 to 18, the gallery will be open from 10am to 7pm daily.

Jordan Wolfson was born in 1980 in New York and lives and works in Los Angeles. Collections include the Luma Foundation, Zurich; Fonds national d'art contemporain, France; Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Bergamo, Italy; Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, Turin, Italy; Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany; Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent, Belgium; Tate, London; Magasin III Museum and Foundation for Contemporary Art, Stockholm; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Art Institute of Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Cleveland Museum of Art; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; The Broad, Los Angeles; and National Gallery of Australia, Parkes. Solo exhibitions include Kunsthalle Zürich (2004); Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Bergamo, Italy (2007); Swiss Institute, New York (2008); CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco (2009); Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf, Germany (2011); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2012); REDCAT, Los Angeles (2012); Chisenhale Gallery, London (2013); *Ecce Homo/le Poseur*, Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent, Belgium (2013); Cleveland Museum of Art (2015); *MANIC/LOVE/TRUTH/LOVE*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2016); *Colored Sculpture*, Tate Modern, London (2018); *Jordan Wolfson's (Female Figure)*, The Broad, Los Angeles (2018–19); and *360: Jordan Wolfson*, Zabludowicz Collection, London (2018). In 2009, Wolfson received the Cartier Award from the Frieze Foundation.

#JordanWolfson

JORDAN WOLFSON

Drawings

Opening reception: Monday, June 12, 6–8 pm

June 12–July 22, 2023

Rheinsprung 1, Basel

Press previews:

Sunday, June 11, 4–6pm

Monday, June 12, 9:30–11am

Refreshments will be served

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