

Press release

Simon Evans & Sarah Lannan
Humble Junkatarians Leaving White Frame

23 January - 1 March 2025

It is with great pleasure that we open our first exhibition at Sankt Knuds Vej 23 C with Simon Evans & Sarah Lannan.

The exhibition ***Humble Junkatarians Leaving White Frame*** presents a collection of new works along with three objects. For the exhibition, we have invited the writer William Pym, a friend and collaborator of the duo, to write an introductory text about their practice.

It is a rare thing to see a mass of recent works by Simon Evans and Sarah Lannan in one place. In their eighteen years of collaborating, Evans and Lannan have not scaled or mechanized their process, and they have not worked with assistants. Their richly layered surfaces, unmistakable fine graphic style and dense texts, some as complete as novels, still take months of labor, by their own hands and thoughts, woven into the pair's lives in Brooklyn.

Since it has been a while, it is worth revisiting the whole story. Evans was a teenage skateboard prodigy in London who took a fork in the road to San Francisco in 1993, where he started making art with words, starting in sketchbooks. It was shown at the scene spot Adobe Books, in San Francisco's Mission District, where it was seen by gallerist eminence Jack Hanley, who started the ball rolling on the work's display and recognition. This has been ongoing and worldwide for the past two decades.

Evans came to prominence at a time when the countercultural forms of expression he'd grown up with—skateboarding, zines, music—were being radically commercialized and coopted around him. The storied Mission School, for example, a group of San Francisco Art Institute students whose language hybridizing graffiti, hobo art, historical grain and signage typology, had made a real impact on global visual culture in the early 2000s. This impact was so great that its style, which is to a certain degree Evans' style too, had by the mid-2000s been chomped on for capital and mushed into culture. This created an enormous challenge for the counterculture and punk movements of the time. It was tough, say, to reconcile the honor and intention of a handstyle with its use as the typography in a Levi's commercial.

But this is not a sad story, since it created the conditions under which Evans' practice, soon in tandem with Lannan, could grow into the unique space it now occupies. In their words, in both slogans and flowing prose, Evans and Lannan's express a knowing cynicism that wrestles with all of culture, digs in on what it means and what it all might be worth. They're protecting it in a way, preserving their modes of doing things and the purity of their relationship the world in a time of knockoffs, simulation and soullessness. The artists have an innate fluency with Situationism and the dérive, surrendering to the mighty tide of culture while mastering it with a panoramic view, as well as Marxism, in their ability to dissect desire—to both enact and critique commodity fetishism at the same time.

Sounds intense. And it is intense, for such is the way of the world. But here's the thing: behind its politics and rhetorical force, the work of Evans and Lannan is never polemical or depressed, because it is also beautiful, funny and clever. The instinct and the weight of the work is untouchable; the observations land clean every time, because Evans and Lannan draw from life. A certain sympathetic impressionism, diaristic moments grabbed in real time, are given their space. Humor is always accessed and enjoyed. And on top of everything, the work is packed with autobiography. It's sometimes coded, flipped into wry therapy-speak, and it's sometimes naked, as trusting and confessional as a letter, but it's always there. The stories they tell are profound and earned, while as economical as poetry. And all of it this is delivered on a chalky, fresco-like surface, the fine faceted stone of accrued fragments and tape and pressure, a buildup of hours and memories. Graphically, the balance of image and text allows every message, every moment, its proper place. As a result, the works glow. The awesome totality of image, the totality of object, created by the artists' process, is its final pleasure.

There is nothing like it. Please enjoy this message from America.

William Pym

Short bio

Simon Evans (b. 1972, London, UK) and Sarah Lannan (b. 1984, Phoenix, USA) are based in Brooklyn, NY. The duo creates intricate, text-based collages that weave poetic phrases, diagrams, and visual elements drawn from everyday life. Their work explores themes of irony and earnestness, presenting emotional landscapes through charts, maps, and inventories that evoke both melancholy and hope.

Evans and Lannan have exhibited extensively, with major solo shows at Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland; and MUDAM, Luxembourg, among others. Their work has been featured in prestigious biennials such as the Istanbul and São Paulo Biennials and group exhibitions at leading institutions including Tate Modern, SFMOMA, and the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art. Their art resides in important public collections such as the Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, USA; CIFO – Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation, Miami, USA; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark; MUDAM – Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg and the SFMoMA – San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, USA.