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David Kordansky Gallery is very pleased to announce Some Crazy Pictures, an exhibition of recent paintings by Peter Saul. The exhibition will open on Saturday, May 2, 2015 at 5130 W. Edgewood Place and will continue on view through June 20. An opening reception will be held on May 2 from 6:00pm until 8:00pm.

Over the last 50 years Peter Saul has created one of the most immediately recognizable bodies of work in contemporary American painting. By maintaining allegiance to no particular school--indeed, his career has in part been predicated upon the skewering of the endless litany of "-isms" that are commonly assumed to define art in the 20th and 21st centuries--he has allowed his own idiosyncrasies to channel the strangeness and perversity of modern life. In his pictures formal experimentation is never far removed from social commentary, and the broad scope of history painting is bound up with emotional responses to the specific day-to-day realities of being an artist.

Some Crazy Pictures, Saul's first show at the gallery, comprises a group of new and recent paintings completed over the last few years. Featuring satirical swipes at money and power, violent confluents of popular and art historical imagery, and absurd anthropomorphism, these works take on a characteristically wide range of subjects. Extreme distortions of the human (and animal) figure are found throughout, as are the insouciant humor and reckless disregard for good taste that have fueled his work for decades, and that prompted early associations between Saul's paintings and the work of the Chicago Imagists and Bay Area Funk artists. Such proclivities, as well as his penchant for cartoonish exaggeration and his lurid palette, would seem to situate Saul at the margins of mainstream art world discourse.

But as paintings like "Mondrian Duck", 2015, suggest, the lines that separate the margins from the mainstream are blurry at best, and often run crooked: here, three artsy Donald Duck look-alikes exchange boxing-glove blows with puffed-up paintings of grids (a floating beret hovers slightly apart from the action, knocked off the head of one of the ducks,

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as if up for grabs). If geometric "objectivity" has become an unimpeachable fixture in the narrative of the development of modern art, it has done so not only at the expense of other visual styles, but of broader ideas about the range of experiences that art can represent. In "Mondrian Duck" Saul lays bare the unquestioned predominance of the Dutch artist's grids in official histories of painting, portraying them as grotesque entities that torment painters as much as, if not more than, they enlighten them.

Saul's work often sheds light on (and sometimes literally eviscerates) what others take for granted, whether in art, politics, or basic social respectability. This lends it an aura of rebelliousness that is inseparable from its insistent formal invention; it also means that his pictures, even when their subjects are complex or have sweeping implications, are highly personal, both as expressions of their creator's sensibility and in terms of the responses they elicit from viewers. Saul grabs hold of topical themes that would scare most artists away for being too risky or too pervasive, and turns them upside down and inside out.

In "Crowded Skies", 2015, he demonstrates, perhaps paradoxically, that history painting's legacy as an academic genre makes it an ideal vehicle for depicting those facets of contemporary life that are most irrational and least amenable to intellectual analysis. A tangle of planes outfitted with sexual organs copulate without apparent concern for a pair of panicked pilots; the latter, reduced to their heads and necks, in fact form the ends of two planes' phalluses, each thrust through the engine of a neighboring plane. Anyone who has traveled by air in recent years will have experienced the feeling that everyone involved is being screwed.

Other works rely on no immediately identifiable reference point, transposing the kinds of everyday objects and images that define Pop art into tableaux that feel both familiar and profoundly wrong. Several center around food, a thematic concern that can be traced back to paintings of refrigerators that Saul made beginning in the early 1960s. In "Lunchtime", 2015, a man, rendered as a cubist-expressionist hybrid of

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scattered facial features, stares with longing, protoplasmic eyes at a sandwich he holds with enlarged fingers. And in "Singing Sandwich", 2014, strips of bacon, leaves of lettuce, and a huge mouth belting out a cluster of musical notes fill the space between two pieces of bread. In these works Saul prompts both laughter and despair, foregrounding the most basic human needs, including in the form of the sandwich's song, the very urge to make art, however arbitrary, difficult, or inexplicable it might be.

Peter Saul (b. San Francisco, 1934) has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions at institutions worldwide, including a retrospective that originated at the Orange County Museum of Art, Newport Beach, California in 2008 and traveled to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Philadelphia and the Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans. Among Saul's other recent solo shows are From Pop to Punk: Peter Saul, Paintings from the 60s and 70s, Venus Over Manhattan, New York (2015); Figaro, Arnold and Marie Schwartz Gallery Met, Metropolitan Opera House, New York (2014); Holy Moly, Städtische Galerie Wolfsburg, Germany (2013); and Peter Saul, Fondation Salomon Art Contemporain, Alex, France (2012). Recent group exhibitions featuring his paintings and drawings include Comic Future, Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio and Ballroom Marfa, Texas (2013-14); Sinister Pop, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (2012); Ordinary Madness, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh (2010); and Bad Painting, Good Art, MMK, Vienna (2008), as well as America is Hard to See, the upcoming inaugural exhibition at the new Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Saul's paintings and drawings are in the collections of many museums, including the Art Institute of Chicago; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam. He lives and works in Germantown, New York.

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