



TL Solien
Disturbances Foreign and Domestic

Exhibition Dates: 03 October – 01 November 2020



TL Solien *A-Hole Falls*, 2015. Acrylic, enamel on canvas. 228.6 x 228.6 cm. 90 x 90 in.

Over the Influence is pleased to present *Disturbances Foreign and Domestic* the first solo exhibition of American artist TL Solien with the gallery. The exhibition will be open at Over the Influence, Los Angeles from 03 October – 01 November 2020 and will present a range of canvases and works on paper from 2013 to the present.

TL Solien (b. 1949, Fargo, ND) creates otherworldly dreamscapes, juxtaposing familiar characters with unusual and outlandish surroundings. Viewers find themselves cast into his idiosyncratic narratives, where strange ceramic tchotchkes, vintage lawn ornaments, and all manner of kitsch memorabilia seem to come alive. And yet his fantastical paintings and drawings, of which a selection from the past five years are included here, are deeply rooted in the real. The clowns, donkeys, sailors, and teapots are out of the bag, and they've come marching right to the canvas's edge, a hodgepodge of seemingly virtuous knickknacks that look

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you right in the eye. While these cultural artifacts ooze a midcentury Americana innocence, Solien reveals a more nuanced subversive dimension.

These canvases are rife with reference points—at once an examination of contemporary social life, domestic politics, and Solien’s personal existential dynamics. The artist imbues these canvases with a certain subjectivity, inserting memories and lived life experiences into his compositions. The larger than life decorative floral teapot that appears in various works including *Imitation of a Kiss* (2015) may represent a metaphor for a love interest, partner, or spouse. In this work, the boxer is bloody, panting, and beaten to a pulp while the opposite figure stands unscathed and unphased. There is a futility to his punches. The artist employs these satirical characters to scrutinize universal pursuits like finding love and maintaining fulfilling relationships. Sometimes, there is no resolution in sight.

Other narratives are less overt but no less sharp. Solien toys with the realm of connotation while simultaneously making direct reference to various cultural phenomena. Characters from 19th century American Western expansion photographs banter beside protagonists from a favorite Cormac McCarthy novel. Older series have both paid homage to and reimagined themes as diverse as Renaissance era Sienese altarpieces and the experience of Ahab in Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*. Solien senses a human frailty and desperation in books, vintage antique objects, and even contemporary current events—each phenomenon equally worthy of his thoughtful analysis.

Solien’s figures are often desperate, dejected, or forlorn. In so many works, he depicts cops pointing pistols, terrorizing citizens, and wielding unchecked power. These pieces mark Solien’s response to the enormous liberties police have taken in fighting crime and the warped sense of justice in this country. In the painting *Cape Passage* (2014) and the drawing *Pretty Polly ETC.* (2015), the artist reproduced the structure of Edward Hopper’s classic *Cape Cod Morning* (1950), inserting a uniformed police officer in the bay window where Hopper’s lone female figure gazes out. Both paintings meditate on our sense of wholesome America, yet Solien’s narrative manipulation invokes a more acute sense of distress that comes from consuming contemporary American current events.

The artist has described the motley crew of characters that he has employed for many years as a tribe of vandals, each pursuing quests more morbid or outlandish than the next. The exhibition can be viewed as a collection of dark motifs that enter his mind, then reproduced as vaguely autobiographical non sequiturs. Curiously, Solien is most interested in the way these figures stand in as points of departure for the human condition. Somehow, there is a rhythm to this chaos.

About TL Solien

T.L Solien, born in Fargo North Dakota in 1949, received a BA degree in Art from Moorhead State University, Moorhead MN in 1973, and an MFA in Painting and Sculpture from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1977. He lives and works in Madison, WI, USA.

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Solien has been invited to participate in numerous exhibitions of National and International magnitude including, the 1983 Whitney Biennial, the 39th Biennial of American Painting at the Corcoran Museum, Washington, D.C.; Avant-Grade in the 80's, at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The American Artist as Printmaker, Brooklyn Museum NY; Images and Impressions, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN and Contemporary Drawings, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA.

Solien's work has been visible in more than 35 solo exhibitions in the last 25 years, and was the subject of a 25-year retrospective titled, "T.L. Solien: Myths and Monsters" organized by the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Madison WI. In 20013, The Plains Museum, in Fargo North Dakota organized the traveling exhibition, "Toward the Setting Sun". "Toward the Setting Sun" emanated from Solien's interest in Herman Melville's "Moby Dick, and Seena Jeter Naslund's, "Ahab's Wife, or the Star-Gazer. From these two literary sources, Solien created over 100 works which, collectively, reimagine the whaling life of Ahab, and that of his widow, as she navigates a life which takes her from the privileged life of a ship captain's wife, and into the unfolding adventures as a participant of the great American westward expansion. "Toward the Setting Sun" traveled to the Billings Museum of Contemporary Art in Montana, and The Sheldon Museum in Lincoln, Nebraska.

T.L. Solien has been the recipient of numerous honors, including multiple Bush Foundation and Jerome Foundation fellowships, University of Wisconsin Graduate School Research Grants, and has been named "Outstanding Alumni" at both the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and Moorhead State University, MN. In 2008 Solien was awarded a fellowship from the Joan Mitchell Foundation, and in 2010 received a Wisconsin State Arts Board fellowship.

Solien is represented in numerous corporate and public collections including, The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Art Institute of Chicago, The Walker Art Center, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Chase Manhattan Bank, Exxon Corporation, New York University, Indiana University Art Museum, University of Iowa Museum of Art, Plains Art Museum, Fargo, ND, and the Chazen Museum, Madison, WI, The Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Madison, WI, the Milwaukee Museum of Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, and the Tate Modern, in London.

Location

833 East 3rd Street
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