



Susan Inglett Gallery is pleased to present ROBYN O'NEIL: *American Animals*, on view from 28 April 2022 through 04 June 2022. The artist will be present on Thursday 28 April from 6 PM to 8 PM.

For over twenty years, artist Robyn O'Neil has been building a world in which the illogical constant of human violence contends with the ungovernable majesty of nature, the sublime. Diligently rendered, O'Neil's vast landscapes provide an arena in which hordes of middle-aged white men wreak collective havoc on the environment and each other. With her signature combination of poetic stylization and ruthless observation, the artist brings them to justice.

An enormous graphite drawing on canvas, *American Animals*, anchors the exhibition and gives the show its name. The first of its kind in scale and technique, the work depicts the final act of O'Neil's saga in which a great flood wipes the slate clean. This titanic seascape, nine by twelve feet in size, is littered with dozens of finely wrought male heads. Whether floating above or sinking below the surface, drifting or drowning, the experience appears to be one of quiet meditation. Both viewer and men are lulled by waves whose gentle slopes evoke locks of flowing hair rather than a righteous deluge. O'Neil's seascape is rendered complacent as its denizens, whose vacant expressions belie the unfeeling ambivalence which led them to this end.

The exhibition *American Animals* represents both an expansion of O'Neil's established oeuvre and an ambitious dive into new material strategies. The artist renders thousands of tiny men who, when not waterlogged, act as a collective wave. They crash violently upon the land and its inhabitants, taking on predators many times their size. References to the most iconic creatures of the American ecosystem are woven into the fabric of this new work: eagles, bison, and wolves are accosted by masses of human figures who fall to their doom from wings and hoofs, their failure comedic and their goals unclear.

Robyn O'Neil offers an evenhanded understanding of the world through a janusian balance of horror and humor. The artist's landscapes are a scholarly *mélange* of art-historical references ranging from George Tooker to Fra Angelico to Honoré Daumier. Small watercolors on hotel stationery serve as a playful reminder of places visited and the passage of time. There is hope to be found here, and it lies in continuous exploration — in observing human history and learning from it.

And then you see the waves without pattern, scooping up everyone, throwing them around like so many floating heads, and you can only laugh in your sobbing about all the silly head bobbbers. Laughter can shake you from the delirium of grief.

- Lidia Yuknavitch, *The Chronology of Water*

ROBYN O'NEIL (b. 1977) creates works on paper whose monumental narratives occupy the liminal space between comedy and tragedy. Her extensive oeuvre excavates memories and art historical references to populate large-scale graphite landscapes. Her short film, "We the Masses" was featured in Landmark's 2021 season at the University of Austin, TX. O'Neil was honored with a recent mid-career retrospective, *WE, THE MASSES*, at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. Her solo exhibitions include the Des Moines Center of Art; the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; and the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA), Winston-Salem. Her work can be found in the permanent collections of the Dallas Museum of Art; Menil Collection, Houston; Philadelphia Museum of Art; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, NYC, among others.

ROBYN O'NEIL: *American Animals* will be on view at the gallery located at 522 West 24 Street Tuesday to Saturday 10 AM to 6 PM. For additional information, please contact Susan Inglett Gallery at 212 647 9111 or info@inglettgallery.com.

Join the conversation with Susan Inglett Gallery on Instagram (@SusanInglettGallery), Facebook (Susan Inglett Gallery), and Twitter (@inglettgallery), and via the hashtags #SusanInglettGallery, #RobynONeil, and #AmericanAnimals