

# JASON VASS

PRESENTS

## MARK DEAN VECA



### ***The Troubled Teens (Work of a Decade)***

JANUARY 26 - MARCH 9

Los Angeles, CA (January 4, 2019). - Jason Vass is pleased to present *The Troubled Teens (Work of a Decade)*, an exhibition of work by Los Angeles based artist Mark Dean Veca.

In painter Mark Dean Veca's latest works, we see the evolution of the artist's perspective on art history, popular culture, and the place of his work within that continuum. In *The Troubled Teens*, Veca achieves both a deeper narrative focus of his message, and a widening discursive expansion of his vision and style.

Veca has always made certain eccentric art historical references in his work, specifically the hyper-stylized, elaborately patterned, decor-derived, hand-rendered and often architecturally integrated paintings for canvas and wall. He has deployed those aesthetic citations, like Neo-Classicalists before him, to construct allegories of present-day cultural issues. But now he

makes the political dimensions of that oblique critique much more explicit. This is true in his large-scale black and white works especially – the hyper-decorative botanicals that are both luscious and ravenous, and the Presidential Seal turned logo of propaganda.

At the same time, Veca’s affection for the artisanal-font vernacular of logos and signage, and his appreciation for text-based artists in modernity, leads him to explore a more commerce-leaning examination of the culture’s shared aesthetic language. In the witty cropping of his detail studies especially, where he puts the “Art” in “Liquor Mart,” and the “LA” in “Everlast,” he expresses the operation of an artist’s decision making in the process of cultural encoding.

Like every conscious citizen, Veca’s attentions have been diverted to the thorny political climate, with a special insight into the layer where the “medium is the message” plays out in our visual culture. By confronting the art historical context, we see in these works a late-Empire decadence, a corpulent excess bespeaking a new Rococo – which is not necessarily, Veca seems to warn, a good thing.

– Shana Nys Dambrot

### **About Mark Dean Veca**

Born in Louisiana to musician parents, Veca received his BFA in 1985 from Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Design (now, Otis College of Art and Design) in Los Angeles. After then spending 17 years in New York City, he returned to L.A., where he continues his work. Veca's art has been shown in galleries and public spaces throughout the United States, Europe, and Japan. In April 2018, the Crocker Art Museum announced Mark Dean Veca as the second recipient of the John S. Knudsen Endowment Fund's \$25,000 prize. The fund was established at the Crocker in late 2012 by a gift from the estate of art collector John Knudsen. Its purpose is to support an emerging or mid-career California artist while also funding programs, exhibitions, acquisitions, and other endeavors related to the artist’s work at the Museum.

Most recently, Veca has been commissioned to create a major new work of permanent public art for one of the new Los Angeles Metro stations on the Purple Line.

### **About Jason Vass**

Situated in the burgeoning arts district neighborhood of Downtown Los Angeles in a 2,700-square foot space designed to accommodate diverse exhibitions and related programs, Jason Vass aims to create an exhibition platform that offers a historical perspective through the lens of contemporary artists. The gallery is committed to cultivating emerging talent and supporting established artists from around the world. Exhibiting artists include: Luke Austin, Deborah Brown, Dan Callis, Nancy Evans, Constance Mallinson, Emiliano Gironella Parra, Douglas Tausik Ryder, and Nettie Wakefield. The gallery manages the estate of Gene Vass. Jason Vass is open Tuesday - Saturday, 11:00am - 6:00 pm.

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