

September 8, 2014

Artist Of The Week: Aaron Johnson

Who: Aaron Johnson
Where he is from: St. Paul, MN
Where he lives now: Brooklyn, NY
What he does: Artist



What was your first experience with art?

I grew up in a house full of Indian art and artifacts; I have vivid memories of one Ganesha tapestry, some Tibetan dragon rugs, and other oddities like a taxidermied elephant foot. Also as a kid I kept a “nature museum” in a walk-in closet, where I displayed magical objects I collected in the woods like deer antlers, dead dragon flies, and wasp nests. I made illustrations of the objects and displayed them alongside the specimens.

You seem to focus on a lot of grotesque imagery with almost childish monster characters. Where do these images come from?

I am interested in the grotesque, the freakish, the abject; especially when paired with beauty, seduction, and humor. The images come from my imagination.



Did you have any fears or phobias as a kid?

Dodge ball was pretty scary. And beards.

How did you start working with socks as a medium?

First of all I had been wearing socks (on my feet) for many years, my whole life! Then it came to me, an absurd idea, a painterly joke. I was feeling goofy and I stuck a sock on a canvas. That was amusing, so then I decided to empty my whole sock drawer on to a canvas. Then it seemed necessary/compelling/hilarious/absurd to collect loads of old socks from many people, and here we are, many large sock paintings later.



What is your relationship with trash?

Trash is sad. We are trashing our planet.

What are you working on right now?

I am busy working on new paintings. Some are reverse-painted-acrylic-polymer-peel paintings, some are sock paintings.

What is there too much of and too little of?

Too many cars, too many TVs. Too much art about nothing, too much art about art. Too much apathy and greed. Too little compassion and generosity. Too much gravity. Too little floating.

What is your WILD Wish?

I'd like to be a wandering sage.

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