



LIST OF WORKS (front to back)

- Malcolm X, 2016
- Yoko Ono, 2014
- Edward Snowden, 2015
- Jack Kevorkian, 2016
- Malala, 2014
- Larry Flynt, 2013
- Joan of Arc, 2013
- Miley Prynne, 2015
- Karl Marx, 2016
- Pussy Riot, 2013

All works spray paint, paint marker, resin.



OGRE • *Hareuhticks*
May 13 to June 24, 2016

OGRE Hungry! Born in da hills of Nasteer Nati. He stay until trayned in toy making. He find clan of Fisher and Price in land of Chicken Wing where he spend much time. OGRE start making stuffs with paint and color. Now he back in land of Flying Pigs and Tasteer Sawsuhjes. OGRE make stuff and Smash wherever he can.



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OGRE
HAREUHTICKS

I gambled and I lost. I failed in securing my options for this choice for myself, but I succeeded in verifying the Dark Age is still with us.

— Jack Kevorkian

I have no intention of hiding who I am because I know I have done nothing wrong.

— Edward Snowden

I don't want to be remembered as the girl who was shot. I want to be remembered as the girl who stood up.

— Malala Yousafzai

Reason has always existed, but not always in a reasonable form.

— Karl Marx

Don't be in a hurry to condemn because he doesn't do what you do or think as you think or as fast. There was a time when you didn't know what you know today.

— Malcolm X

If your life changes, we can change the world, too.

— Ono



In a new series of paintings by Cincinnati artist OGRE (Matthew Grote) called Hareuhticks, the questioning of established order is presented as reverential, a mode of thinking to be applauded and immortalized in portraits of numerous historical and contemporary figures who have each—for distinctly different reasons—been labeled or treated as heretics.

In OGRE's renditions, the subjects shimmer as a rogue's gallery of iconoclastic saints. Painted with spray paint, paint marker, and glossed



over with a thick surface of resin, they coyly appear as though deified in stained glass, inhabiting a church of rational thought, diverse creativity, and bold, rebellious action. Their wildly assertive and bejeweled aspects amplify the respect and awe with which the artist has rendered them.

Utilizing an illustrative approach that hybridizes OGRE's diverse connections to mural work, tagging, and even toy design, their cartoonish style never appears comical. It's the ideal visual attitude to combine the artist's riotous and enthused admiration with the measure of respect he wants to evoke. There is no hint of parody here.



There are humorous allusions throughout—Miley Cyrus wearing a blingy letter A borrowed from Hester Prynne or Dr. Jack Kevorkian decked out as the Grim Reaper—but even those touches are lightly applied. Pornographer Larry Flynt, who fought a prolonged First Amendment battle, may be floating on a bed of asses, but still wears a stoic demeanor. Malcolm X, evading bullets fired through what is presumably his autobiograpy, is coolly and respectfully portrayed, a calm hero of clear thought.

Elongated and highly stylized, Joan of Arc is dynamically heroic, as are Pussy Riot in their Norman Rockwell pose. Yoko Ono may be wearing a yellow submarine on her head, but she may also be holding the heart of John Lennon. Malala is heroic, bold and learned, Karl Marx hilariously theatrical but appropriately iconic, and



Edward Snowden is the hero of Nottingham, upending the secrecy of power.

The hyperbolic style of the paintings does not obscure their innumerable painterly effects, the subtle layering and shading. Striking at a distance, the works afford a world of glorious effects upon closer inspection. On the one hand, OGRE's style is intentionally over the top, but applied with a tremendous amount of subtlety and grace. It's a delicate move that maintains the explosive appearance of the works while simultaneously accomplishing a beatific, rapturous tone.

From one painting to the next, the color palette exhibits considerable control and helps contain the aggressive figuration and patterning. And there are numerous compositional touches that repeat. Kevorkian and Snowden share a weirdly similar space and Snowden and Joan of Arc are similarly posed. Ono and Malala share a frontal attitude and even the repeated forms above their heads. There is a compositional integrity throughout that reminds us that these are not ad hoc illustrations. The tight control over image, line, and color remind us that these are highly considered studies. Within a contemporary and vernacular visual style, they aspire to epic grandeur, likenesses for the ages.

That OGRE's chosen subjects run a historical gamut and cross various territories of influence—religious, political,



artistic, cultural, and pop cultural—speaks to the bigger picture of allegedly heretic actions. There is always a pressing need for a counter within the culture, a recognition of those who give voice to alternative thought, and strike an abrupt incision into established and calcified modes of thought.

If sometimes perceived in conflicted ways during their times, they remain the heroes we need.

John Massier
Visual Arts Curator

