



Frozen Screen
2016
Mixed media
28 x 36 in.

291 GRAND ST | JAN 27 - MAR 5, 2017

Simon Evans™ *Soul Gym*

OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 6-8 PM

James Cohan is pleased to present *Soul Gym*, the fourth solo exhibition of work by Simon Evans™ at the gallery. Featuring a selection of works in various media, the exhibition will open at the gallery's Lower East Side location on Friday, January 27 with a reception from 6-8 PM and will be on view through Sunday, March 5.

Simon Evans™ is the artistic partnership between Simon Evans and Sarah Lannan. Their collaborative work is widely known for its text-based aesthetic. Simon Evans™ uses handwritten phrases and other texts to create dense collages saturated with short, poetic phrases, drawings, and images often created from the detritus of everyday life both inside and outside of the studio.

Soul Gym confronts our increasing societal obsession with exercise, self-improvement and embodying the message of lifestyle brands. "There was a poster for a yoga studio - a schedule of classes - and it was super spiritual, language-wise, and it felt a bit blasphemous and maybe funny. And there's a real obsession for self-improvement.

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But it's just physical. The survival of the fittest and we were really interested in that," says Simon Evans™. The artists expand on these concepts with a series of new works that compelled them to utilize a variety of mediums, such as sculptured letters, metal, plastic, fabric, and yoga mats.

How to Pretend Your Free (2016) features a single figure mid-stride in a black and white composition with the title of the work emblazoned above his head reminiscent of a classic Nike advertisement. One of the handwritten phrases in *Black Magic Capitalism* (2016) exhorts the viewer repeatedly to "run fucking run," in an ode to the kind of graffiti seen on a run around New York City. *Some Game a Comfortable Web* (2016) is composed of two conjoined yoga mats overlaid with a hand drawn maze. Although there is no clear path through the labyrinth, the rewards of this particular practice are found in the ritual. Similarly, *Another Selfish Prayer Rug* (2014-2017) functions as a place for collecting ideas and prayers through ritual movements like a layer of sediment slowly building over time.

The ritualizing of wellness is analogous to the obsessive, repetitive nature of many works by Simon Evans™. *The Divine Comedy* (2016) is a work of 3" x 5" index cards onto which Evans and Lannan have painstakingly copied the entirety of Dante's 14th-century poem. *Rainbow* (2016) pleads forgiveness by repeating "SORRY" in various colored and sized sticker letters. *Frozen Screen* (2016), a copy of Henri Matisse's famous *Dance*, merges themes of physicality, spirituality, and mechanical reproduction. The work of Simon Evans™ is ultimately concerned with the process of art-making, inviting viewers into a space filled with possibilities for revelation and continued searching.

Simon Evans™ was the subject of recent solo exhibitions at Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, OH; Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean (MUDAM), Luxembourg; Aspen Art Museum, CO; and White Columns, New York. Simon Evans™ was featured in the 12th International Istanbul Biennial in Turkey, the 27th São Paulo Biennial in Brazil. Works by Simon Evans™ are included in the permanent collections of several prestigious institutions including the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO), Miami, FL; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark; Perez Art Museum Miami, FL; Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean (MUDAM), Luxembourg; Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA; Museum of Art Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI; and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA. Simon Evans and Sarah Lannan live and work in Brooklyn, NY.

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