



52 WALKER ST | MAR 4 – APR 1, 2023

This American Dollhouse, 2021, mixed media
40 1/8 x 30 1/8 in., (101.9 x 76.5 cm)

Simon Evans™

Room to Live

James Cohan is pleased to present *Room to Live*, an exhibition of new work by Simon Evans™, on view from March 4 through April 1, 2023, at the gallery's 52 Walker Street location. This is the artists' sixth solo exhibition at James Cohan.

Simon Evans™ is the artistic collaboration between Simon Evans and Sarah Lannan. Together, the New York-based artists create dense text-based collages brimming with poetic handwritten phrases, drawings, and images. *Room to Live* features mixed-media collages and sculptural works that explore domestic spaces as arenas of play. Incorporating layers of collaged paper, text, and found items including detritus from their own lives, each of the works depict the cross-section of a dwelling—ranging from townhouse to condo to construction site to camper van—revealing an interior symbolic tableau. While certain objects point to the artists specifically, these spaces represent a universal experience: the daily and habitual patterns of life and domesticity, city living, and our fraught relationship with material belongings.

Simon Evans™: Room to Live
by Sarah Leslie Lannan and Simon Alan Evans

Who doesn't like little stuff?
Nobody we say
Our most monotonous concept album to date, a very conscious attempt to make a series of works about the same thing done the same way

Wanted to move around in a really long song, explore but also have a little stability.

'All pictures are objects which are toys' was the concept
We imagined pictures like sacred objects used in rituals but they're toys,
Vessels etc you get it.
Tired of pretending to know the world or even describe it, the toy version of the world was a helpful way to feel honest.

We started with
This American Doll House
and we were so into it we wanted to just keep going
Felt it did the in-between, objective, subjective, interior, exterior thing we aim for in our art

The first doll house is our apartment in New York with some Lego reductioning to make it look like a toy apartment.
Wanted to describe America in the everyday way

Like I said we wanted to keep going and because of the themes etc it was easy to imagine the second one as a sequel complete with a murder wall like in all those detective books and shows and films and games.
'The guilty landscape of detective novels,' it says at the center on a map of Manhattan. The murder wall was America trying to figure out where it was.

The third movie normally jumps the shark so still wanting to explore (say) America through the toy-version of our apartment, we imagined America as a haunted place haunting us, a very current events feeling of course, which is easy to mainline. But with the help of clever books such as 'Ghostly Matters' by Avery F Gordon
We saw our lives haunted from a critical social perspective
With more depth and distance from the now.
Felt freeing, while at the same time safe, to describe the world through horror troupes with the genre's unconscious, reflective parameters.

Other big books for these works were 'On Longing' by Susan Stewart, a standard for art Miniaturist self-confidence seminars, and
'Life A User's Manual' by Georges Perec, in which the depiction of the world as an apartment building in Paris is the mode.
Those books + 'Gulliver's Travels' continue to matter a great deal to us and our making.

After the haunted dollhouse, which was haunting to say the least, we wanted, needed, to do different buildings to stay in this practice.

Storage is of course about the self-storage business / life. It felt big and quite modern.
We labeled the boxes like people do with their things when moving them about, but instead of the particulars of the objects and places, we imagined the ridiculously bigger human things and themes behind them.
The storage building is a toy copy of a real one here in Greenpoint, a former glue factory which is beautiful and brutal in a Rachel Whiteread way.

Progress is of course about progress but also the human problem with it, the mistaking of progress with problem.

Where we live buildings are going up everywhere, the gentrification of the gentrification. It felt right and exciting to question progress from this building, another dollhouse / toy apartment.
It's very material based, most of the structure's materials are used in real construction—wood, cement, metal etc.
It reminded us of how jobs are built into toys, a child being programmed for adult life.

All the buildings are about home, belonging, belongings, which in our biography and everyone else's is a big thing.

Barbie RV is a look at the online living/working van life that leaves many Americans shipwrecked, trapped in their dreams now nightmares. Online everything's great, propagating the lie.

'This American Dollhouse Condominium' is based on a giant condominium built down the road from us. It's a large box built on top of an ancient, grandiose empty bank known as a landmark here
'Own a piece of history' is one of the condos selling taglines.
They have showroom apartments on many lower levels (available apartments?) made up like full-sized doll house rooms.

'Room to Live' is a song by The Fall, which means Mark E. Smith, One of the best singer songwriters and Victorian bosses England has ever known. It's a tongue in cheek title because he was a grand punk and we use a princess palette. In our use of 'Room to Live,' we imagine a scary overstuffed world where you can find a little space in between the junk.

Started in the punk era and considered post punk in general. He recently died but while alive was considered a brilliant monster, a clever nasty social critic and great artist
His version of 'Room to Live' is him imagining he's being hemmed in by the man and other idiots walking through his stuff, not allowing him to live his life in peace
I feel there isn't even the possibility of that anywhere these days but am aware I don't know much and am living somewhere noisy.

About the Artists

Under the name Simon Evans™, Simon Evans and Sarah Lannan have been the subject of significant solo museum exhibitions at institutions including 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 and the 27th São Paulo Biennial in Brazil. The artists' work has also been included in international group exhibitions at museums including the Museum Van De Geest, NL; Columbus Museum of Art, OH; Jewish Museum, New York; Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Germany; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark; GEM Museum of Contemporary Art, The Hague, Netherlands; Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, Brazil; and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA.

Work by Simon Evans™ is included in the permanent collections of major institutions worldwide, including the Berkeley Art Museum, CA; Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (CIFO), Miami; Honolulu Museum of Art, HI; Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebaek, Denmark; Pérez 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; and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA. Simon Evans and Sarah Lannan live and work in Brooklyn, NY.

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