



Stefan Bondell, *Justice in Crisis*, 2019, Acrylic on canvas, 67 x 65 1/2 inches (170.2 x 166.4 cm) © Stefan Bondell; Photo by Argenis Apolinario; Courtesy the artist and Vito Schnabel Gallery

Canvases with a dark alley atmosphere are dense with intricate black marks depicting thickets of figures and bits of narrative from antiquity and the present. Bondell's art is centered around storytelling, and he is here using cultural signifiers to construct a visual diary of the pandemic, recent political unrest, and wider social conflicts.

Much of the imagery in Bondell's recent work is gleaned directly from classical antiquity. A native New Yorker, he grew up visiting the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and its vast collections have exerted an abiding influence. His visual lexicon mingles imagery from Greek, Roman, and French statuary, Mayan deities, and sculpture from Asian, African, and Central and South American cultures, with images of modern-day figures familiar from politics and mass media. By "doing the most with the least"- committing fully to his deep black palette- Bondell draws his array of pictures into elaborate constructions. His repetition and reconsideration of black zones focus the viewer's concentration on the structure of each painting, pulling the eye and mind from region to region of the composition until they eventually coalesce into recognizable narratives.

Within his intricate and psychotropic designs, Bondell embeds architectural details, mythic symbols, and patriotic tropes: an unfurled American flag waves over a majestic king of the beasts, adjacent to a vulnerable child whose body seamlessly morphs into the lion's mane. The sacred and profane merge to poetic effect in such compositions, yielding a highly original form of history painting.

About the artist

Stefan Bondell (b. 1981) was born and raised in New York. He is a painter and a poet, and his work has been exhibited at Vito Schnabel Gallery, New York; The Hole, New York; Acquavella Galleries, New York; 39 Great Jones, New York; Tripoli Gallery, Southampton, NY; OHWOW, Miami; Royal/T, Los Angeles; and the Soncino Biennial, Italy. Bondell's work is included in the permanent collection of the High Museum, Atlanta.

STEFAN BONDELL
DARK MARKS
FEBRUARY 2 - MARCH 18, 2023

VITO SCHNABEL GALLERY
455 WEST 19TH STREET
NEW YORK, NY 10011

Vito Schnabel Gallery is pleased to announce the exhibition *Stefan Bondell: Dark Marks*, opening at its West Chelsea location on February 2, 2023. This presentation will debut works from the New York poet and artist's most recent series of paintings - a dramatic series of monumentally scaled works executed in an obsidian palette, with deep, compounded layers of classical and contemporary imagery used to explore the turbulent sociopolitical condition of the United States today.

On view through March 18, 2023, *Dark Marks* is the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery.

In the works on view in *Dark Marks*, Bondell brings a particularly New York sensibility to the centuries-old painting paradigms of chiaroscuro and tenebroso.