



TRAITOR MUSCLE









Orcish Shelving System

2018

80" x 128" x 72" & 80" x 66" x 72"

cast plastic, spray paint, paper, duct tape, wood, clothes,

This work is derived from three distinct genesis points: diagrams of Africans in the holds of slave ships, photographs of the bunk beds at Belsen concentration camp, and JRR Tolkien's orcs. I came across all three as a child.

Tolkien was born in proto-apartheid Colonial South Africa. It is difficult to overstate his foundational impact on the genres of fantasy, science fiction, and (by extension) popular culture. Difficult also to parse out colonial-era racisms and prejudices from the 'fantasy world' that he synthesized.

Orcs are described in language that borrows from dated descriptions of black and brown people. Human-shaped things afforded no protections or rights, that exist to be slaughtered by exclusively white protagonists.

Welding together histories of slavery, extermination, and dehumanization I sought to present bodies being pressed into the very structures which hold them in bondage.

The first time I made orcs, they were scatted individually on a floor.

The second time: a small pile. All the times they've existed they've operated in the space between appearing to be dead and appearing to be asleep. I became interested in adding a third point: orcs being grown. That felt like one reason they might all be stacked but there are other reasons too: In what appears to be a world where automation will not set us free... In a world where meaningless toil continues despite the obsolescence of physical labour... In a world where billionaires will not simply allow people to live freely... what is the future of labour? I foresee bleak obscenities. What is the ultimate in dehumanising objectification? It is to be forced to become industrial furniture.







Best Clone Sons

2018

84" x 120" x 34"

Foam, polyester resin, spray paint, wood, cast plastic, epoxy, acrylic,

The clones are a way to think about multiple overlapping fascisms: occurring historically and occurring today. They are skin-headed, wear boots modeled after Doc Martens, and gloves modeled after riot police.

Prior versions existed within the logic of relief sculpture (chosen for its relationship to the monumental architecture of fascism) but Best Clone Sons is free-standing and double-sided. The reverse of the sculpture is a mirrored copy. Like Bentham's panopticon, it observes in all directions.

The armor is red for blood, and the yellow tear serves as a symbol of 'performative grievance', a key policing strategy under the tyranny of whiteness. It is designed to sit between actual medieval armor (which I have studied up close) and the various armors of science fiction (from Star Wars' Stormtroopers to Warhammer 40,000's Space Marines).

I have been working with the figure of the armored clone specifically for several years. They have appeared in successive works, with greater means of production each generation, year after year. First they appeared as 'My Clone Sons', then as 'Better Clone Sons', and finally here as 'Best Clone Sons'. They wear riot gloves here but sometimes wear the thin nitrile gloves of border control agents. Here they are skinheaded, like skinheads, but sometimes they wear long 60s bobs like the predatory, bloodless patricians of old (think Jimmy Saville or Andy Warhol). But as well as fascism, they are a way to think about the font from which fascism metastasizes: toxic masculinity. Indeed, the series of works was partially born from my own difficult relationship with my white father. I spent long years thinking of the way he left 'my' family in order to go and start a 'better' one. This mode of reproduction became a relevant conceptual framework for me when i began producing figurative sculpture. And so the work comes from this and from its logical (illogical?) furthest extension: Thinking through into a world at the end of the projects of white supremacy and patriarchy... a world of angry cisgendered heterosexual men hatching clones of angry cisgendered heterosexual men hatching clones of angry cisgendered heterosexual men hatching clones of angry cisgendered heterosexual men hatching clones of angry cisgendered heterosexual men and on and on and on... and the weaponization of reproduction.









Glass Aristocrat

2018

58" x 21" x 35"

cast plastic, epoxy, wood, foam, clothes, formica laminate,

Cast in clear epoxy, with fine clothes, and sculpted luxury sneakers: the form of the 'Glass Aristocrat' is derived from a gluey mishmash of a helicopter missile pod, a lemon juicer, a papal Bacon, and a xenomorph. Featuring a screaming/smiling grilled mouth and lidless diamond eyes, the Aristocrat represents the Vitruvian form driven to sour extremes, whiteness driven to its illogical conclusion. Designed to embody the patrician creepiness of the West's ruling class, at once: the feudal landed baron and the silicon valley billionaire.

The Aristocrats chair is based on the senatorial thrones depicted in Jean-Léon Gérôme's 1867 painting 'The Death of Caesar'. It is standard neoclassicist fare but for the chairs which, at odds with the historical record (senators sat on marble benches), squat in the scene like bizarre orphaned future echoes of modernist design.





Silver Walls

2018

1616 ft²

self adhesive vinyl, all the walls,

I put silver on all of the walls. Under some parts of the silver were pieces of paper and vinyl, cut into patterns or images. They gave the effect of the walls being embossed in places.

Audience members, upon entering the space, wouldnt be able to look at all the sculptures without seeing their own distorted figures.

An inversion of an old work: 'Chrome Ruins' (2015) but, also, it was about containment... about having the space serve as something like the inside of a thermos flask, or a cold storage unit, (or Warhol's Factory). Someplace where the ideas being generated would radiate and bounce around inside the space *only*... a pocket universe, a tiny little hell. A place that is its own thing but also can be taken as an ungenerous description of our own world.



Floor Work 2018

2018

1153 ft²

red and green floor paint, all the floor,

the floors of the space. a way to link the works: the red is the red of the clone' armour. the green is the green of the orcs skin. I was thinking about factory floor safety markings and, also, about the ways that robots (the authoritarian enforcers of the future) map and see the world.

when
lying
cold,
our
our
50

we are all
in the pit,
& covered in
breaths
accents dead
years will

together
cuddling
quicklime
exhausted
pass

and
(the
will
by
in

all the people
curators, the
find
frolicking
a future,

we knew
critics, the
themselves
white
secure and

professionals)
surrounded
children
white

and,
to a
they'll
say

alone or
friend,

"oh,

wasn't that

sad"

Traitor Muscle II

2018

87" x 95"

poem, vinyl cut lettering,

Traitor Muscle was the title of a small chapbook I released with Choking Files in 2017.

I initially thought to title the whole show Party Politics (after Philip Larkins poem of the same name – a miserable two stanza nihilo-koan about alcoholism and society) but ‘Traitor Muscle’ grew louder and more vital in my head, attaching itself to works as they were ideated and developed, insinuating itself into conceptual frameworks, until nothing else felt appropriate.

Traitor Muscle is a pun, ultimately. Half of it is the idea of a ‘muscle’ (henchmen) rebelling against their leader. The other half comes from thinking around metaphors of body and nation... a literal traitorous muscle, a body betraying itself: an unwanted erection in a public place, or cancer... and spinning off from that, its about the idea of bodies as metaphors for larger collectives... like nation states. Traitor Muscle, in the context of a national body, could be segment of a population either actively rebelling or actively being oppressed and viewed as seditious and unworthy by a controlling majority.

These are some of the nasty gluey places that the words ‘Traitor Muscle’ comes from.

For weeks after seeing the first images of child concentration camps in June 2018: I woke up and I went to work I spoke to coworkers and I ate dinner and I went to bed and the whole time, in the back of my brain, children were screaming in cages.

Eventually, I moved past this. And eventually, I moved past fearing the upcoming civil war. I moved past thinking only about how fascists will kill me and my loved ones. I moved past thinking who I know that might survive. And I settled at a state of constant and bitter rumination over who I personally know that will thrive under fascism.

Who do i know that is an artist now who will continue having shows? who do i know who isn't doing well now will go on to find great success under fascism? which commercial galleries will be allowed to continue? which museums will grow? what disciplines will expand? etc



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P.S.



Chrome Landlord
2018
22" x 6" x 6"
Cast plastic, paint, steel, wood.
ed of 5 + 2AP

Chrome Landlord is the larval form of Glass Aristocrat.