

FORT GANSEVOORT

artspeak

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Fabulism

Fort Gansevoort (<http://www.fortgansevoort.com>)

New York, 5 9th Avenue

The British-born and Los Angeles-based artist Anthony James returns New York with his first solo exhibition in 10 years. Titled *Fabulism*, the exhibition is installed around Fort Gansevoort's distinct architectural interior within a three-story Greek Revival house. Artspeak editor Osman Can Yereb

Osman Can Yerebakan: What was your reaction to the untraditional architecture of Fort Gansevoort as a gallery space

Anthony James: When I saw the architecture of the space, I thought it's a great place for me to do an exhibition for its industrial look with me already complete and when I saw the space, I knew that it'd be a great match. I think exposed brick, for example, adds so much to the



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Installation View of Anthony James, *Fabulism* ©Sean Deckert

OCY: One of the major threads in the exhibition is fabulism. How do you interpret this term within the exhibition concept?

AJ: I am very interested in meditation, especially kundalini yoga. When you meditate, there's a timeless aspect to it and similarly, sometimes place and brought them back here. I am interested in creating works that look alien to the reality of this moment. I am interested in challenging something like alien frequencies back to this world. My works look a little bit extra; they exist in this world, but they are almost otherworldly.

"I try to be very present in the moment and completely move with my instincts. I try to surrender to the process and in order to be really present, you just have to let it go. Sometimes a piece sits in the studio for over a year and sometimes I can finish a piece in a day. I have no problem with putting something down for over a year and just finishing it in a day."

OCY: Materiality is a very important element in your work. The dialogue you create with bronze or wood has been evocative in this current exhibition?

AJ: Before I left for Germany, I would use a lot polishing and plating techniques to reach perfection. At the moment, I leave the surfaces raw and have a painterly feeling about it, because I try to enhance the gesture and keep the organic look. Some of the pieces are steel and bronze on top of wood, which is very important, for example I used aluminum on solid block of ebony in one of *Untitled* sculptures.

OCY: The artists who use steel, approach the medium very precisely and obtain fabricated looks that are almost architectural?

AJ: Definitely. All this work is absolutely spontaneous. Even though I am using some architectural techniques to initially make the shape, I am using gestural marks that are almost organic. This is purely instinctual. I try to be very present in the moment and completely move with my instincts. I try to surrender and in order to be really present, you just have to let it go. Sometimes a piece sits in the studio for over a year and I come back to it with putting something down for over a year or just finishing it in a day.



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OCY: For a sculpture titled *KŌ* from 2008, you destroyed a complete Ferrari. How do you compare your earlier practice

AJ: In this exhibition, I have works from 2003 and 2004 next to works that are only a few months old. The work in which I destroyed a Ferrari was a metaphor for the male ego in the material world. The car was a metaphor for the male ego and the viewer witnessed its destruction. This was 10 years ago, but it still resonates back then until this day. On the other hand, now I can put a lot of finesse to a steel piece, but I am certainly not precious about it. If I need to make a mark on a piece titled *War Paint* for which I used a gun to make marks on the surface. I wanted to penetrate through the surface, so I used bullets and a pencil would push through paper. I am not interested in the idea of using guns, but it was a helpful tool in this process.

OCY: Your work makes reference to natural elements such as sun, moon or rocks in terms of their geometric forms. The

AJ: I have always wanted to make things to celebrate the material. I believe you can reach the essence with simplest forms. Sometimes this requires you to wait for it to evolve. These marks are all open to interpretation; I don't have preconceived ideas about them. For example, the piece outside has been somewhat weathered. I don't mind that it's outside and exposed to rain, sun or dust.