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Gagosian New York to Present New Paintings by Dan Colen

Lover, Lover, Lover, Opening September 7, 2022, at 522 West 21st Street, Explores Themes of Home and Influence



Dan Colen, *Mother (Intersection)*, 2021–22, oil on canvas, 59 × 151 inches (149.9 × 383.5 cm) © Dan Colen

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Home can be a dream for some and a nightmare for others. It is the past we come from and the future we aspire to. But inevitably it's where we are, the earth we stand, work, and rest on in the present.

—Dan Colen

NEW YORK, August 5, 2022—Gagosian is pleased to announce *Lover, Lover, Lover*, an exhibition of new paintings by Dan Colen from the *Mother* and *Woodworker* series. All the paintings belong to the final group of his Disney-inspired canvases, which he initiated with the *Candle* series in 2003. Also included are two sculptures by Sy Colen, the artist's father.

Borrowing its title from a song written by Leonard Cohen on a visit to his ancestral homeland of Israel during the Yom Kippur War, *Lover, Lover, Lover* employs the aesthetics of Disney animation to reflect on the many “lovers”—god, birthplace, friend, father, mother, spouse, and child—that we have, lose, and move between. Colen, who is also Jewish, relocated briefly with his family to Israel when he was five years old, an experience that shaped his idea of home in all its charged complexity. *Lover, Lover, Lover*, which was conceived of during another pivotal moment in the artist's life, explores this perception in concert with ideas of tradition, influence, and the always-fraught American dream.

The *Mother* paintings, which Colen began in 2009, are based on scenes from the Disney classic *Lady and the Tramp* (1955) and reflect a concern with the places that shape our lives. They propose various sites as potential manifestations of “home,” exploring a spectrum between freedom and bondage. In this series, Colen incorporates the theme of influence by “quoting” brush marks from a broad range of historical movements including, but not limited to, Photorealism, German Romanticism, and American Spiritualism. The images present moments from a journey toward a hinted-at promised

land, conjuring feelings of uncertainty, but also of hope. For Colen, Disney's creations manufacture an idealized backdrop to our shared desire while operating in the context of power and control; the series explores our collective need for a secure existence—and the reality that many will never attain it.

In the *Woodworker* paintings, begun this year, Colen employs imagery from Disney's *Pinocchio* (1940), building a more literal connection to his own family—specifically his father—and establishing a meta-narrative within the exhibition. The new works depict details of the old wood-carver Geppetto's studio, alluding to the moment at which materials become autonomous from their user. *Woodworker (Musical Boxes)* (2022), which pictures an assortment of figurines crowding the puppeteer's workspace, alludes to the artist's output; *Woodworker (Book)* (2022), which focuses on a thick leather-bound tome surrounded by other books and objects, gestures toward the process of research. In the relatively spare *Woodworker (Chisel)* (2022), Geppetto's chisels and paint containers are confined to the margins of the composition, leaving a central area clear and charged with creative potential.

Both the *Woodworker* and *Mother* series thematize the way in which familial relations mirror the notion of creative influence, and the inclusion in the exhibition of two sculptures by Colen's father—a self-taught wood-carver—underscores this idea. One of these portrays Dan Colen's grandfather; another represents his mother while pregnant with him, bringing the project full circle.

While *Lover, Lover, Lover* focuses on Colen's painting practice, the artist also continues to work on Sky High Farm in New York's Hudson Valley, which he founded in 2011 as an extension of his studio practice. Now operating as a 501(c)(3) organization, the farm grows and raises nutrient-dense produce and proteins for donation to marginalized communities and is committed to creating pathways toward food sovereignty. Coinciding with the opening of *Lover, Lover, Lover*, Sky High Farm will host a symposium at the Judd Foundation on September 17, 2022. The series of talks will focus on nontraditional art practices and artist-run organizations, land access, and community empowerment. Additional details and registration information are forthcoming.

Dan Colen was born in 1979 in Leonia, New Jersey, and lives and works in New York. Collections include the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Jiménez-Colón Collection, Ponce, PR; and Dakis Joannou Collection, Athens. Exhibitions include the Whitney Biennial, New York (2006); *Peanuts*, Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo (2011); *The Illusion of Life*, Inverleith House, Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, Scotland (2013); 12th Biennale de Lyon, France (2013); *Help!*, Brant Foundation Art Study Center, Greenwich, CT (2014); *The L...o...n...g Count*, 421 East 6th Street, New York (2014); *Psychic Slayer*, Herning Museum of Contemporary Art, Denmark (2015); *Shake the Elbow*, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY (2015); *Oil Painting*, Dallas Contemporary (2016); *Sweet Liberty*, Newport Street Gallery, London (2017); and *Dan Colen—Works from the Astrup Fearnley Collection*, Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo (2018).

#DanColen

DAN COLEN

Lover, Lover, Lover

Opening reception: Wednesday, September 7, 6–8pm

September 7–October 22, 2022

522 West 21st Street, New York

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