

THE ARMORY SHOW



BLUMKA
CONTEMPORARY

Dan Witz
Booth #227

Dan Witz



Dan Witz employs his own adaptation of the dynamic foreshortening technique first developed in the 15th century, using it to construct jarring aerial perspectives that capture the complexity of modern life. Each painting conforms to the precise outline of the figure, the dizzying point of view heightening the sense of focus. His works oscillate between chaos and calm, immersing viewers in classically rendered moments that evoke both the intensity and stillness of life today.

"I always work from my own photographs – and I take photography very seriously. For the concert pieces I put on steel-toed boots and try and get the camera as close as possible to the eye of the mosh pit. My street art usually originates from studio photos that I digitally manipulate in Photoshop. All my source images go through a fairly intensive digital re-think before becoming the actual references for my pieces. Over time I've gotten deeper into Photoshop and have come to regard it as important a tool for me as paint or brushes.

I really enjoy the photo prep part of my process. Especially the hunter-gatherer part. There's nothing like plugging in after a hard photo shoot and seeing what has been caught by the camera. I also look forward to the ridiculously complex and overwhelming process of constructing the compositions."

"After all the years that I've been painting, the simple fact that mere paint on a flat surface can create light, and space, and energy, and so much more, is still a miracle to me—it never gets old and never fails to make painting an adventure. But my temperament is not really that of a traditional academic painter. Probably because my formative years as an artist occurred during the wild west New York City of the early 1980's. My art student days took place in the midst of all the crime and social failure and unbridled insanity of the lower east side...and all the creative energy of punk rock, graffiti, and street art that emerged out of the rubble. After that, the idea of spending one's art life in a classical vacuum seemed effete and self indulgent—and a choice I'd seriously regret when I got to be the age I am now.

But classical realism never gets old for me. While it's true I use traditional academic painting techniques, and really love looking at that kind of painting, my goal has always been to utilize the miracle of academic painting's presence (and it's seductiveness) for my own less traditional narratives."



Utilizing a classic, sweeping horizontal format, History Painting "Frieze" adapts classical architectural reliefs into a dynamic contemporary narrative of crowd movement and friction. The composition channels Old Master techniques to structure public dissent into a formal, continuous register.

"The Frieze, is, simply, a frieze. A traditional horizontal format I really enjoy."
Dan Witz



History Painting 1 (Frieze)
2020-2025

Oil on Panel (Diptych)
48 x 96 in
Price upon request

History Painting 1 detail shot



History Painting 1 detail shot





A monumental centerpiece of the History Paintings series, *La Grande Machine* resurrects the cinematic scale and technical rigor of 19th-century Salon painting to record the explosive reality of contemporary public conflict. Featuring roughly 75 battling figures, the diptych intentionally reclaims an Impressionist-era derision aimed at the grandiose, multi-figure academic paintings commissioned by the French Salon. Combining Old Master painting techniques with a massive, multi-figure scale, the work captures the raw energy of modern public unrest without falling into simple political commentary.

"During the pandemic I painted a group of contemporary riot pictures. I call the series, History Paintings. The biggest of the group, a diptych with about 75 battling figures is titled "*La Grande Machine*". This references a coded impressionist insult for the overcooked academic potboilers of the French salon era. Highest status among the official salon genres in those days were the '*Grandes Machines*', the wide screen multi figure history paintings.

I don't think the morality police from back then would be awarding my history paintings any medals, but I get a lot of insights from those dusty old monsters we hurry by in search of the Vermeers or Van Goghs. For me, technically, the 19th century was the high summit of western realist art. If you can see past the paternalistic moralizing, there's a lot of serious painting from those forgotten masters."

-Dan Witz



History Painting IV
 La Grande Machine
 2020-2025

Oil on Panel (Diptych)
 60 x 96 in
 Price upon request

History Painting IV detail shot

History Painting IV detail shot





History Painting "Les Pompiers" directly references the late-19th-century French avant-garde critique of academic painters, whom Impressionists mockingly labeled "Pompier" due to the shiny Roman helmets in their grandiose battle scenes mirroring those of the French fire brigade. In this work, Witz bridges historic satire and modern civil tension, employing classical foreshortening and atmospheric lighting to ground contemporary friction within the traditions of Western realism.

"The title, *Pompier*, is a reference, again to the impressionists (I picture Degas), who mocked the salon's many academic potboilers by equating the ubiquitous shiny Roman helmets in their battle scenes with the French fire brigade (the *Pompier's*) helmets. The salon artists were referred to as *Pompier's*."

-Dan Witz



History Painting II
Les Pompiers
2020-2025

Oil on Panel
36 x 48 in
Price upon request

History Painting II detail shot



History Painting II detail shot





Executing modern street level tension within the classical circular format, this tondo references Renaissance and Baroque composition, where the round frame intensifies spatial compression and focal drama. The curved border concentrates the motion of the figures, demonstrating how historic compositional structures can heighten the emotional and physical energy of contemporary public life.



History Painting VI (Tondo)
2020-2025

Oil on Panel
47 x 47 in
Price upon request

Civil War detail shot



Civil War detail shot





Serving as one of Witz's finest works on shaped aluminum, this large scale cut-out isolates the physical mass of colliding figures directly against the wall, removing traditional pictorial borders. By applying hyperrealistic oil glazes to a custom contoured substrate, the work accentuates the kinetic energy, detailed drama, and sculptural presence of the figures, bringing the legacy of Salon style history painting directly into the viewer's physical space.

"The large cut-out is another version of these action paintings--the set piece of what I was developing in the single and double figure cut outs."

-Dan Witz



History Painting IV Cut Out
2020-2025

Oil on Aluminum Panel
50 x 50 in
Price upon request

History Painting IV detail shot



History Painting IV detail shot





Civil War Cosplay
2020-2025

Oil on Panel
44 x 28 in
Price upon request

Civil War Cosplay detail shot



Civil War Cosplay detail shot





Black Bloc Gas Mask
2020-2025

Oil on Panel
22 x 18 in
\$7,000

Black Bloc Gas Mask detail shot



Black Bloc Gas Mask detail shot





Jay
Black Bloc
2020-2025

Oil on Panel
20 x 16 in
\$7,000

Jay detail shot



Jay detail shot





Lauren
Black Bloc
2020-2025

Oil on Panel
20 x 16 in
\$7,000

Lauren detail shot



Lauren detail shot





Standing Soldier
2020-2025

Oil on Aluminum Panel
32 x 21 in
\$5,000

Standing Soldier detail shot



Standing Soldier detail shot





Running Soldier Cut Out
2020-2025

Oil on Aluminum Panel
21 x 28 in
\$5,000

Running Soldier Cut Out detail shot



Running Soldier Cut Out detail shot





Dual Scrum Cut Out
2020-2025

Oil on Aluminum Panel
30 x 24 in
\$8,000

Dual Scrum detail shot

Dual Scrum detail shot





Civil War
Yellow Gloves Cut Out
2020-2025

Oil on Aluminum Panel
26 x 23 in
\$8,000

Civil War detail shot



Civil War detail shot



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