

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

NEW YORK | ASPEN

FORREST KIRK

*A Villain's Origin Story*

On View July 29 – September 12, 2021 | 100 S Spring Street, Aspen, CO



Forrest Kirk, *Hannibal*, 2021. Acrylic, spray paint and gorilla glue on canvas, 30 x 24 in.  
Courtesy of the artist. © Forrest Kirk. Photo credit: Jeff McLane

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new works by Forrest Kirk, *A Villain's Origin Story*. For the exhibition, Forrest presents a narrative group of seven paintings that examine experiences of Black Americans in the past and how these stories may intersect with the present day. Depicting elements from Aspen's unique history, Forrest uses material and form to invite the viewer into important conversations about the past and present. *A Villain's Origin Story* is on view July 29 - September 12, 2021, on the first floor of the gallery.

Fundamental throughout Forrest's practice is the examination of anxieties that result from underlying power structures. As a point of departure for *A Villain's Origin Story*, Forrest explored the history of the "Quiet Years" in Aspen, a period marked by economic downturn, hardships, and subsequent population decrease in the region beginning in the late 1800s. In particular, the artist focused on the story of one Aspen resident, Hannibal Brown. Through primary source interviews collated between 1893 - 1947 in the book *Aspen: The Quiet Years*, Forrest learned about Brown's experience as the only Black man on record in Aspen for years during this period in the town's history. For *A Villain's Origin Story*, Forrest narrows in on this feeling of isolation and its potential psychological impacts, weaving in references to past events with present lived experiences.

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The use of narrative and materials in the works are fundamentally intertwined and hold equal weight in the exhibition. In *A Villain's Origin Story*, Forrest focuses on his use of Gorilla Glue, a material that he has implemented throughout his practice to create the sculptural dimensions and bold surfaces of his paintings. For instance, the starting point of the exhibition, *Blue Bird*, shows an innocent image of Hannibal Brown holding and playing with a bird. Evoking this naivety, Forrest applies simple lines of Gorilla Glue on the canvas that are unblended with areas of paint. This development of narrative and gradual expansion of the medium is seen as the exhibition progresses. In subsequent paintings, such as *Hannibal* or *Drink the Koolaid*, more mature images of the protagonist are accompanied by developed application of the glue medium, which the artist incorporates with layers of paint to form the raised lines of his figures. The narrative culminates in *Dreaming of Revenge*, the final image of a seemingly broken hero, wherein thin layers of glue are spread with paint to create rich fields of color. These seamless exchanges of material, narrative historical references, and current discourse are central to the artist's works, allowing for questions surrounding the impact of social relations to arise.

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**Forrest Kirk (b. 1975)** lives and works in Los Angeles. Kirk studied at California State University, Los Angeles and spent time studying classical painting techniques in an atelier in Paris, France. Forrest has been the subject of recent group and solo exhibitions such as at the Hauser Wirth Gallery, NY; Blum & Poe, CA; and Gavlak Gallery, FL. His work is included in numerous private collections and foundations, as well as in the permanent collections of the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, CA; and Santa Barbara Museum of Art Santa Barbara, CA. Forrest is also a recent recipient of the Academy of Art & Letters New York - Artist Purchase Award.

### About Marianne Boesky Gallery

Since its inception in 1996, Marianne Boesky Gallery has represented and supported the work of emerging and established contemporary international artists of all media. In its first decade, the gallery was instrumental in launching the careers of major artists through an innovative exhibition program; and in 2016, the gallery expanded its flagship location to its adjacent space on West 24th Street. The gallery's newest location, Boesky West, opened in 2017 in Aspen, CO, and presents rotating exhibitions by both gallery artists and artists invited to present special projects. Now, the gallery continues to actively represent many significant artists such as Ghada Amer, Donald Moffett, Sanford Biggers and Frank Stella, among others. To learn more, visit [marianneboeskygallery.com](http://marianneboeskygallery.com).

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For more information about Forrest Kirk, please contact Gallery Director Michael Plunkett at [michael@boeskygallery.com](mailto:michael@boeskygallery.com) or 212-680-9889. For press inquiries, please contact Thomas Dewey Davis, THIRD EYE, at [thomas@hellothirdeye.com](mailto:thomas@hellothirdeye.com)

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