

ARTFORUM

CRITICS' PICKS



Trenton Doyle Hancock

SHULAMIT NAZARIAN

616 N. La Brea Avenue

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Trenton Doyle Hancock's first solo exhibition in LA, "An Ingénue's Hues and How to Use Cutty Black Shoes," is an engrossing primer on the artist's extraordinary fictive universe. Displayed in the gallery's front hallway is a set of intricate ink drawings that compose a graphic novel, which begins with the artist at his drafting table. The drawings set the tone for the entire exhibition: Replete with references to modern art, underground comix, mythology, and the Bible, they depict the cosmology of the Moundverse and the Mounds, plant-animal hybrids that emanate positive energy and are at odds with the villainous Vegans.

The graphic novel's measured eccentricity erupts in the riotous paintings that hang in the main room. These works, layered with text and collaged objects, synthesize styles and symbols in bursts of psychedelic color and dynamic action. Near the center of the space stands a statue of a black-and-white-striped woman, another character in the Moundverse, within a cyclone of colored spheres.

Ever present is Hancock's protagonist and alter ego, TorpedoBoy. In the painting *Step and Screw Part Too Soon Underneath the Bloody Red Moon*, 2018, he is trailed by a grotesque Klansman, whose red noose snakes through his own body like entrails. The influence of Philip Guston is clear in the inclusion of the hooded figure and its visceral physicality—bulging and sinewy—but the perspective is uniquely Hancock's. These images deliver incisive commentaries on the bigotry, violence, and moral ambiguity that characterize American society.

—Natalie Haddad