

**Davin Watne**  
***Picture the Wall***



**HAW CONTEMPORARY**  
**May 19 - June 24, 2017**  
**Opening Reception - Friday, May 19, 6 - 9 PM**

Combining the history of oil painting with the visual language of our contemporary lives, Davin Watne's *Picture the Wall* is an installation of 38 paintings standing ten feet tall and spanning the width of the gallery.

The history of oil painting is steeped in the rhetoric of power. Evidenced by painters like Jacques-Louis David, who created public relations campaigns for political figures like Napoleon, and Gilbert Stuart, who painted the iconic portrait of George Washington, we can see the illusionist manipulation of oil on canvas as a means to convince publics. Drawing from this legacy, *Picture the Wall* employs the same visual language to interrogate how we understand our contemporary times and our social landscape through the images produced today.

With the upsurge of images being generated by photojournalists and social media outlets alike, *Picture the Wall* combines appropriated images, plein air observational works, and graphic representations of flags to consider contemporary methods of representing nationhood, history, and contemporary American life.

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The installation collages these individual representations into an impassable wall; Watne creates a totalizing image from fragments. The combination of these fragments ultimately draws attention to the reality that each painting is an illusion, or construction, and not a transparent or unbiased viewpoint. On the opposing side of the wall, museum-style placards are attached to the backs of each painting with descriptive captions elucidating the image itself. This aspect of the installation informs the audience about the individual images while generating a fragmented essay.

Davin Watne's *Picture the Wall* functions as a portrait of our times and a consideration of painting's ability to help us reflect upon our collective national experience today.

### BIO

Davin Watne is an artist based in Kansas City where he is a full-time lecturer of Painting and Drawing at the University of Missouri - Kansas City and the lead Curator and Director of the UMKC Gallery of Art. Watne received his BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute in 1994 and his MFA at Maryland Institute College of Art in 2013. He has been awarded the Charlotte Street Foundation Award, ArtsKC Inspiration Grant, Avenue of Arts Municipal Arts Grant, Art in the Loop Public Arts Grant and he is a former resident of the Studios Inc. Residency Program.

### ARTIST STATEMENT

"I am interested in the aesthetics of power, authority and desire as constructed by governing systems. This awareness pushes me to develop visual means of resistance. In my practice I communicate images and experiences that are visceral and symbolic in nature, ultimately creating new visual lexicons that combat the prevailing modes of signification."

### **Press Contact:**

Emily Eddins | 816.842.5877 | [emily@hawcontemporary.com](mailto:emily@hawcontemporary.com)