

THE BERMAN MUSEUM OF ART
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The Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art at Ursinus College
Announces Mark Thomas Gibson's *Overture*



Mark Thomas Gibson, *Flag 1 (The Big One)*, 2024. Ink on canvas.

Collegeville, PA, January 9, 2025—This year's first compelling exhibition at the Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art at Ursinus College is *Overture*, showcasing new works by Philadelphia-based artist Mark Thomas Gibson. Running from January 23 through April 6, 2025, *Overture* offers a powerful invitation to reflect on current events and reimagine how we can collectively pursue the common good in our too often divided society.

The exhibition opens with a selection from Gibson's *Town Crier* series, an archive of collages that feature a fictional character who recounts current events happening on the national and global political stage. Inside the Berman's main gallery, visitors will encounter an immersive, multi-sensory experience featuring five large-scale paintings and Gibson's first hand-drawn animated film, accompanied by an original score. These new works capture the unsettling urgency of a shifting political landscape, evoking emotions and responsibilities both individual and civic.

Gibson's work examines complex narratives surrounding race, identity, power, and cultural representation through a distinctive visual language that challenges traditional perspectives on U.S. history and current events. A self-described American history painter, Gibson draws from a dynamic blend of influences—from the storytelling of Kerry James Marshall and the subversion of Philip Guston to the satirical edge of pioneering political cartoonists Thomas Nast and John Singleton Copley—fusing elements of graphic novel illustration, Surrealism, and Symbolism. The result is a visually striking body of work that challenges viewers to probe beyond the surface to grapple with the layered complexities of power, identity, and protest in the United States.

Overture not only showcases Gibson's striking aesthetic and technical skill across mediums, but also highlights his commitment to amplifying discussions on historical memory, collective trauma, and the ongoing pursuit of justice and equality. The exhibition's visual, sonic, and kinetic choreography serves as a provocation to look, feel, think, and act, inspiring us to consider our role in shaping a better, fairer, more inclusive society.

"This exhibition is especially relevant as we enter 2025, offering a profound lens through which to examine the complexities and challenges facing our nation and the world," says Berman Executive Director Lauren McCardel. "Gibson's bold visual narratives challenge us to confront the enduring legacies of systemic inequity and the collective anxieties of our time, sparking critical dialogue and personal reflection that are essential for meaningful progress. His ability to weave thought-provoking storytelling into visually compelling compositions opens new perspectives on narratives of both American art and U.S. history, encouraging viewers to reflect on their own responsibility as citizens in a democracy's unfinished work of fulfilling its founding ideals for all."

A supporting publication will accompany the exhibition, examining the critical themes in Gibson's work, including his interest in caricature and cartoon, his influences, and the *Town Crier* series.

The Berman Museum invites visitors to celebrate the opening of *Overture* at a reception and artist's talk on Thursday, January 23, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. The exhibition will be on view through April 6, 2025. Admission is free.

This exhibition is made possible by the Terra Foundation for American Art. The Terra Foundation, established in 1978 and having offices in Chicago and Paris, supports organizations and individuals locally and globally with the aim of fostering intercultural dialogues and encouraging transformative practices that expand narratives of American art, through the foundation's grant program, collection, and initiatives.

About the Philip and Muriel Berman Museum of Art: As a teaching museum on a liberal arts campus, the Berman Museum plays a vital role in fostering an understanding of the visual arts within the learning process and society at large. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, the Berman supports the educational mission of Ursinus College across all disciplines. Through its collections, exhibitions, and educational programs, the museum highlights the relevance of the visual arts to contemporary issues, empowering students and visitors to engage in meaningful dialogue and lifelong learning. The Berman is a world center for the works and personal archives of iconic French-American artist Francoise Gilot, and the steward of one of the largest campus sculpture collections in the nation, making Ursinus a living public art space open to the general public.

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