



AVENUE DES ARTS

Contemporary Art Gallery

Avenue des Arts
807 S Los Angeles St
Los Angeles, CA 90013

Opening
Friday, June 25th
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm



Ufo907, No Loitering (2021), Aerosol and Acrylic on Shaped Canvas 62 x 77 x 1.5 in
| 157.48 x 195.58 x 3.81 cm

NEIGHBORHOODLEMS

UFO907

Opening Friday, June 25th
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Friday, June 15th - Saturday, July 31st, 2021

Avenue des arts is thrilled to present a second solo exhibition with the renowned New York City graffiti phenomenon UFO907. UFO, a self-described 'Neighborhoodlem,' fills the gallery walls with nineteen painstakingly handcrafted canvases, contoured to the outline of each painting, leaving the astute viewer mystified at how these unlikely shapes were created. The artist's use of aerosol spray can as his main medium brings an unpredictable rawness, and frenetic energy to his work. The temper a mental, unwieldy nature of the spray paint is juxtaposed with the use of acrylic fabric paint, bringing a slow, meditative quality, or out breath, to his craft. UFO hacks his spray cans with homemade caps and various nozzles, allowing him to produce the fine lines of classic painting with this fundamentally unwieldy medium. While the unpredictability of spray paint on surface is conducive to the spontaneity and magic UFO brings to life in his pieces, the artist is masterful and in full control, adding layers and texture with intentionality to balance the spontaneity and whimsy.

"Neighborhoodlems" is a tribute to the soul and vitality of UFO's hometown of NYC. Each canvas features the well-known, ever-evolving, signature UFO character, inhabiting varied city landscapes, giving the viewer an honest glimpse into the gritty, raw cityscape that UFO and his homies call home. An unconventional beauty emanates from these recreated scenes, or moments in time. While his paintings often depict ordinary, everyday city settings (a stoop in the Bronx, a dumpster in Queens) each scene is made vital and alive, through the layered stories being told.

Throughout history New York's most revered icons have gone against the grain and experimented on the edge, at the boundary of what is currently acceptable. These paintings honor those experimenting on the edge, "hoodlums" of our time, both legendary, and everyday, with an especial nod to UFO907's closest friends.

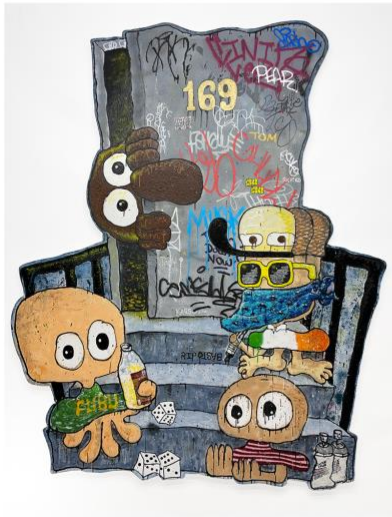


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"No Loitering"

Outside of Manhattan's busy midtown and financial district, once you make your way to the outer boroughs and their ethnically diverse neighborhoods, New York becomes a city of residences. The centerpiece of this show depicts a common neighborhood scene-- homies congregating on the front stoop, people watching, shit talking, having a beer. Maybe even throwing some dice. This is the natural place people congregate, a way to be together without the city's overpriced bars and clubs.

"No Loitering" presents 3 friends passing time on one of these stoops. At the top of the stairs sits UFO907, tagging up an old friend who has recently passed. Below, two friends throw a game of 4,5,6 and drink a beer. The boy at the bottom, like a younger brother, is tagging along and learning the ways of the streets. Once again, from above the graffiti covered door, comes kilroy. It might be time to pack it up and move two doors down to the next available stoop.

Ufo907, No Loitering (2021), Aerosol and Acrylic on Shaped Canvas
62 x 77 x 1.5 in | 157.48 x 195.58 x 3.81 cm



"Two Man's -N- a Look out"

The work entitled "Two Man's -N- a Look Out" depicts the camaraderie and communal act of writing graffiti. First, a dark-skinned boy, leaning around from the left, cautiously catching a tag on the face of the central UFO907 graffiti piece. Then, the eye wanders to the lone white hand reaching around from the left, wielding a roller attached to a long pole (a typical graffiti tool). Up top, completing the crew, the ever-present Kilroy peers out. Perhaps on the look-out for a disgruntled pedestrian or oppressive officer of the law?

Technically, this piece demonstrates the slow progression of layers, building up, and fading back. Each layer adding intensity through heavy lines and vibrant color, and the next slowly dimming it back, leading to a mellow translucence. The continuous line work in this piece, flowing from one letter, object, or body part, to the next, is a ubiquitous technique used in street art.

Ufo907, 2 Man's -N- a Look Out (2021), Aerosol and Acrylic on Shaped Canvas
62 x 51 x 1.5 in | 157.48 x 129.54 x 3.81 cm



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Ufo907, *Keep on Truckin'* (2021), Aerosol and Acrylic on Shaped Canvas, 104 x 68 x 1.5 in | 264.16 x 172.72 x 3.81 cm

"Keep on Truckin'"

"Keep on Truckin'," one of the larger pieces in the show, depicts a typical night in one of the endless neighborhoods of the five boroughs of NYC. UFO is up to his tricks, with a bucket of black house paint, and a roller on a pole, drawing his moniker on the side of a typical box truck, on it's daily journey through the city. UFO better watch out!!! Seems someone is keeping tabs on what he's up to.

The truck being defaced is a fantasy depiction of a Knickerbocker Ice Company delivery truck, harvesting ice from Rockland lake to the many neighborhoods of New York City in the 1800s.



Ufo907, *Meet Your Maker* (2021), Aerosol and Acrylic on Shaped Canvas 60 x 61 x 1.5 in | 152.4 x 154.94 x 3.81 cm

"Meet your Maker"

"Meet your Maker" is the only grayscale piece in the show. This piece began as a still life, a UFO character with his bundle of tools overflowing in his arms. Through the starkness of the grayscale pallet a luminous quality emerges, suggesting a being showing up, with all his life's work, messy and bare faced—standing before his maker.



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"Waste Management"

Oh, the ever iconic Green Waste Management dumpsters of New York City! Grimy and dirty, full of broken up furniture and smelly food... rats jumping out all sides. These green beasts are a beacon for graffiti writers, on every other block in every neighborhood throughout this city. Catch a tag and watch your moniker travel from borough to borough as the dumpsters are transported. Every now and then, leaning over to catch a tag, out pops a grinning treasure hunter-- a dumpster diver with an old discarded chair in one hand, a loaf of day-old bread in the other. Imagine this giant kilroy head popping out from this dumpster to be a mythic urban creature; New York cities own elusive Loch Ness Monster, reportedly seen surfacing from these green wells. Never confirmed. This brings a smile to my face. The iconic simplicity of this painting makes it one of my favorites in the show.

Ufo907, *Waste Management* (2021), Aerosol and Acrylic on Shaped Canvas 61 x 60 x 1.5 in | 154.94 x 152.4 x 3.81 cm



"They gone yet?"

This simple piece depicts someone peering cautiously from an aluminum trash barrel like those typically found outside New York city apartment buildings. But, who is this guy and what the hell is he doing in there? Hiding from the police in an almost empty trash can after midnight on a NYC street? A respite from the chase, peering out to see if the coast is clear. For my generation, this painting is likely to conjure nostalgia for one of my favorite characters from childhood, Oscar the Grouch. The keen observer who looks at the surface of this garbage can will find two tiny small green splashes of bright green paint on the garbage cans surface. This is all that is needed to honor Oscar the Grouch's undeniable connection to this piece.

Ufo907, *They Gone Yet?* (2021), Aerosol on Shaped Canvas 34 x 48 x 1.5 in | 86.36 x 121.92 x 3.81 cm



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Ufo907, *Bästo* (2021), Aerosol and Acrylic on Shaped Canvas 49 x 66 x 1.5 in | 124.46 x 167.64 x 3.81 cm

"Bästo"

This piece began as a portrait of well-known graffiti artist, Bast (aka Michael Pollimeni) and became a eulogy to the life and work of this humble, legendary Artist who heartbreakingly left this world this past Spring, way before his time. After 25 years communicating with one another via tags on the streets of NYC, several years ago Bast and UFO finally met unexpectedly in a bar in Brooklyn. They traded tags over a beer, anointing, in person, a bond of mutual respect that emerged so many years before. The art world, and Bast's hometown of NYC, have lost an incredibly talented, visionary, artist, who embodied the true grit and raw energy of quintessential New York.



*Artist note: Who is KILROY?

The "Kilroy was here" character/motif that recurs throughout my work was adapted from the popular WWII moniker used by military service men, perhaps representing an innate urge to leave a mark; to show presence: I existed here, in this place, in this lifetime, on this planet.

In my work, on the one hand, Kilroy represents the other, what is outside the self, sometimes friend, sometimes foe. On the other hand, the Kilroy moniker humorously embodies the artist/creator himself, peeking out from behind his creation, taking a peek at the viewer. With an air of pride, sprinkled with a tinge of insecurity, he is saying: "Hey, Look at me! I made this beautiful thing." All while observing the viewer to see if she is in awe of the work? Or dismissing it and walking past.



"Street Ball Series"

This series pays homage to Streetball, a game of passion and immense skill that has had such a powerful influence on the culture and neighborhoods of NYC since it's beginning in Rucker Park in the 1970s. Two years ago I painted a canvas titled West 4th set in the iconic West village street ball court. "NeighborHoodlems," gives me the opportunity to delve back into this subject that is quintessential NY. And frankly, basketballs are so much damn fun to paint.



Ufo907, *Black Mamba* (2021), Aerosol on Shaped Canvas, 55 x 64 x 1.5 in | 139.7 x 162.56 x 3.81 cm

"Black Mamba"

This piece, "Black Mamba," is a salute to the city of Los Angeles and basketball legend, Kobe Bryant, after his tragic passing this past year. I felt compelled to paint a piece honoring the "Black Mamba". A young man in his LA LAKers hoodie, is poised and full of determination, ready to take on anyone or anything that stands in his way. Despite his success and fame Kobe continually returned to the Neighborhood streetball courts, revealing him as down to earth, and committing to keeping his connection to the streets where the game began and the people who make it happen.



Ufo907, *Team Player* (2021), Aerosol on Shaped Canvas, 43 x 63 x 1.5 in | 109.22 x 160.02 x 3.81 cm

"Team Player"

"Team Player," the second piece in the Streetball series, is all about the magic that is possible when people from scattered neighborhoods, with differing backgrounds, ideals and worldviews, come together around a shared love for the game on the iconic ball courts strewn across the city. Like the Streetball teams that arise organically throughout New York's neighborhoods, members of graffiti crews find their way to one another from far flung neighborhoods and backgrounds, uniting as a force to be reckoned with. In this piece the player wears a jersey with the iconic New York Knicks color scheme, decidedly revealing him as a player on a New York team; the number 907 on the jersey undoubtedly places him on my team. The 907 graffiti crew!



Ufo907, *1981* (2021), Aerosol and Acrylic on Shaped Canvas, 55 x 73.5 x 1.75 in | 139.7 x 186.69 x 4.44 cm

"1981"

"1981" is a homage to the decade that molded me. It was the year MTV came upon the scene. It was a decade full of flamboyant, gaudy fashion and sauce pop music. New York City was at its seediest. Crack cocaine vials covered NY's gritty streets. Rap music reverberated onto the streets through portable ghetto blasters, on the shoulders of people struttin the city with 40 ozs. of beer in hand. It was the decade of Herring, Basquiat, Whorhal, Madonna, to name a few. In this piece the UFO character, donned in classic 1980's fashion, stands beside a boom box with a 40 oz. The beer, and the two basketballs at his feet, suggest he is a second rate player, or just a fan standing along the sidelines of the west village courts, enjoying a game of streetball.



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"Legally Insane Series" : Trips 1-7

As a teenager experimenting with drugs in the 80s, I had my fair share of ineffable, eye-opening, mind expanding experiences. I recall a favorite urban legend from the 80s: "If you've tripped on LSD more than 7 times, you are automatically declared legally insane." I'm surprised that I'm not locked up in a padded cell along with all my childhood friends. This series of smaller UFO pieces plays on this myth. Each small canvas, painted with its own tie dye pattern and wide eyed stare, represents a step in our journey towards total insanity.



(Left image) Ufo907, *Legally Insane Series: 1st Trip* (2021), Aerosol and Acrylic on Shaped Canvas, 22 x 30 x 1.5 in | 55.88 x 76.2 x 3.81 cm



(Center image) Ufo907, *Legally Insane Series: 2nd Trip* (2021), Aerosol and Acrylic on Shaped Canvas, 21 x 32 x 1.5 in | 53.34 x 81.28 x 3.81 cm



(Right image) Ufo907, *Legally Insane Series: 3rd Trip* (2021), Aerosol and Acrylic on Shaped Canvas, 20 x 27.5 x 1.5 in | 50.8 x 69.85 x 3.81 cm



(Left image) Ufo907, *Legally Insane Series: 4th Trip* (2021), Aerosol and Acrylic on Shaped Canvas, 24 x 29 x 1.5 in | 60.96 x 73.66 x 3.81 cm



(Second from left image) Ufo907, *Legally Insane Series: 5th Trip* (2021), Aerosol and Acrylic on Shaped Canvas, 23.5 x 29 x 1.5 in | 59.69 x 73.66 x 3.81 cm



(Second from right image) Ufo907, *Legally Insane Series: 6th Trip* (2021), Aerosol and Acrylic on Shaped Canvas, 22 x 30 x 1.5 in | 55.88 x 76.2 x 3.81 cm



(Right image) Ufo907, *Legally Insane Series: 7th Trip* (2021), Aerosol and Acrylic on Shaped Canvas, 20 x 33 x 1.5 in | 50.8 x 83.82 x 3.81 cm



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UFO907 came to Earth in the mid 90's, walking out on Art School disillusioned by the standard path of the struggling artist he saw before him. Abandoning the art world, UFO found himself allured into the subcultures of graffiti and vandalism. The paint brush was traded for the spray can and the endless walls, forgotten back lots, rooftops, and delivery trucks of New York City become both his studio and his gallery. The unpredictability of material and painting surface, the risk of getting arrested or chased, the never ending adventure of paintings and in strange places under the cover of darkness all contributed to the style and development of UFO's work.

Fact is UFO907 has never quite fit perfectly within the classic constraints of graffiti. From day one it's been clear that UFO's graffiti stems from a fine arts background, with unconventional painting techniques and highly expressive line work.

As one of the pioneers of character based graffiti UFO907 has helped (for better or worse) push the subculture of graffiti into the mainstream, with his highly recognizable and playful imagery. As well helping to usher in the new art movement known as "Street Art" where young artists of today have caught onto the power and freedom of beginning an art career on the streets as a bridge and shortcut into the gallery world.

Finally after 20 years, hundreds of paintings, millions of drawings, come and gone, UFO907 has changed gears, making the transition back into the studio. While staying true to his graffiti roots with the UFO icon and his use of spray paint and markers.

As of late, UFO has been turning out prolific bodies of work, both painting and sculpture, that exhibit a passion and deep understanding of materials and the boundless methods of application, while overflowing with an energy that can only be found on the streets.