

SHANE CAMPBELL GALLERY

ArtForum
February 2008

PICKS- 02.27.08 Los Angeles

Jason Meadows

MARC FOXX
6150 Wilshire Boulevard
February 16–March 8



Beckoning visitors from the back wall of Jason Meadows's exhibition are several stenciled disembodied heads resembling the iconic farmer's wife in Grant Wood's *American Gothic*, which stare gauntly from their canvas support into a gallery annexed by four brawny and bizarre sculptures. The only painting in the exhibition, *Hysteria* (all works 2008), summons the same nineteenth-century Middle American values as the four emblematic objects. A family of hogs, a baseball player, a supersize old-fashioned microscope, and a weather vane are what Meadows has fastidiously fashioned out of old and new materials, among them found pieces of metal, regulation baseballs, stained wood, and impeccably welded wrought iron. But in this Americana-themed collection of icons, Meadows's additive sculptural method also underscores a thrifty ingenuity that is prized within the puritanical tradition under scrutiny.

AK-Gothic is a direct architectural quote from Wood's famous painting. The nine-foot-tall free-standing facsimile of the farmhouse's gable window and roof is topped off with a weather vane, something Wood cropped out of his canvas. Meadows's weather vane, however, substitutes the quintessential rooster ornament with a militia-grade machine gun contoured in metal. This egregious juxtaposition crudely undercuts the narrow-minded, moralistic values now entrenched in America's heartland. The scathing critique is furthered as Meadows supplants realism—the preferred language of the Regionalist movement to which Wood's canvas belongs—with abstraction in *Wild Pitch*, *Hysteria*, and *Pig Latin*. For example, Meadows irreverently employs a Futurist vocabulary to construct his dynamic baseball pitcher. Meadows may be shooting fish in a barrel with his crude political accusations, but his partisan thinking has led to a series of perplexing and outlandish sculptures.

—Michelle Grabner

2021 S WABASH AVE
CHICAGO IL 60616
+1 (312) 226 2223