

# New American Paintings

JURIED EXHIBITIONS-IN-PRINT

## CRUSHING THE CAN: WENDY WHITE

*Oh!*, my good fucking *God* can you hear it?, that low sounds like harnessed thunder, that rumble of plates and paradigms being pushed, the trembling, the shuddering, heaven-shaking, deity-quaking--because He is hiding—kraken's roar of an engine, an engine of creation through destruction, God's Own 1972 Plymouth Scamp column cracked and with the proper hand *finally* at the wheel, stepping down, stepping hard with all the driver's got, dropping that pedal like a guillotine and shredding denim and the very fabric of time and space, ripping loud and fast though an amalgamation of the decades of the American man, the formative years when the whole bloody disgusting thing, the thing which we're witnessing the apex and nadir both of now—an extinction boom, the rage-filled cry of something mortally wounded, the eyetooth corner, the coiled snake striking forth from the fly, the death rattle, please let it be the death rattle!—this hypermacho, alpha-male, dick-in-one-hand, beer-and-throat in the other toxic masculinity, and she's crushing that can now;

societal poison, background radiation, crouched lurking in the language the fashion the movies the music the literature the art the politics the science the laughable notion of some sort of current fair form of Supreme Justice, and she's *dragging* it!, runnnnnning it down the road til the denim frays and the bleach sprays and the fucking fuckers see *themselves*, right in the roaring jaw—that strong jaw, the indomitable jaw, that wish-I-had it jaw—of that azure bolt, chrome gleaming like Caliban's mirror, that righteous Slant-6 rending the sky, the road, society, setting it all *inline*, tearing through wood paneled woods like a wild horse (no Mustang) and leaving nothing but Bifrost puddles in its wake, the rainbow blood of the land of the Old Male Gods whose doors she's just righteously blown off, puddles and the rumbling, that marrow-shaking, right-making, not-sated-yet *growl*... – B. David Zarley, *Chicago Contributor*



Wendy White | *Prettier Underneath*, 2018. Archival pigment print. 32 x 24.75 x 1.50 inches. Image by Ian Vecchiotti, courtesy of the artist and ANDREW RAFACZ.

Wendy White is taking those masculine codes, that Red-Blooded American Male bullshit that drapes women on car hoods, justifies running a rack of Buds with your buds, writes gross, pining hagiographies to boys, tales only of victims and Kings—but never at fault, no, boys will be boys, right?— and they're *hersnow*, you quailing fellows. The conquest is all over *Natural Light*, her solo show at [Andrew Rafacz Gallery](#) in Chicago, written in denim, beer cans, muscle car advertisements, Dremel carved missive.

It would be something like a stroke of luck that a show which posits cans of Budweiser and Natural Light as icons came around right as Brett Kavanaugh is laying claim to the American sacrament of choice as some sort of bizarre defense; it would be luck if something similar isn't happening *all the damn time*, because taking aim at toxic masculinity is like shooting ugly fish in a barrel, and one hopes White never quits firing. She's chemo for the cancer.



**Wendy White | *American Bleach Effect (Budweiser)*, 2018. Bleached recycled denim on canvas, UV print on plexiglass. 24 x 24 inches. Image by Ian Vecchiotti, courtesy of the artist and ANDREW RAFACZ.**

White puts the show down low where it belongs, brining visitors into the basement, plush yellow carpet—flattened and darkened and driven down by the procession of people on it, streaked like a burn-out from the efforts of the gallery door—and wood paneling, the *ugh*man cave now a catacomb. This is the milieu of cheap beer and denim and car ads ripped out of magazines on the wall, the natural habitat of the American male, not quite the 70's or 80's but that decade-less liminal age where reality and change lives. Whoever was last in here was chased out, leaving behind nothing but partly burned down cigarettes and Neanderthal scribblings —“*No Tits in the Pits;*” *Mopar or No Car;* *Road Runner* “*Super-Bird;*” *1967 Shelby Cobra*.



**Wendy White | *Keep on Truckin'*, 2018. Bleached recycled denim on canvas, inkjet on canvas, Dibond, UV print on plexiglass. 106 x 217 inches. Image by Ian Vecchiotti, courtesy of the artist and ANDREW RAFACZ.**

At a time when the domination of a particularly poisonous, terrifyingly large cohort of men that now feels emboldened, in their new armor of khaki pants and red-meat hats, feels untenable, like existential terror and also, just maybe, the pride before the fall, Wendy White's reclamation of their symbols—my symbols too, I need to understand, even if I renounce them—feels powerful despite its playfulness, that threatening space of beers and basements and boys being blown apart, ripped through by cylinders straight and true as a spear.

Here's the deal: it won't be their world much longer. And Wendy White's already got them wrapped around the axel.

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***Natural Light* installation view. Image by Ian Vecchiotti, courtesy of the artist and ANDREW RAFACZ.**

The car-ad collages mix the freedom of muscle and the road, the countercultural shorthand of skateboarding—*skate and destroy!*—and snippets from *Thor* comics and pixelated early video games. This is inkjet printing as automatic painting, cars and commercialism, the classic American combo, overlaid and reclaimed by the fantastic, the original images blown out and fuzzed and pushed into the background by White's additions. The