

Horrific Cabinets



Portraits of Donald Trump and Kellyanne Conway from the exhibit "Cabinet of Horrors" by artist Robbie Conal.

Donald Trump isn't the inspiration artist Robbie Conal wanted, but it's the inspiration he got. The "Godfather of Guerrilla Street Art" and his latest show take on the White House – again.

By **BETH SPOTSWOOD**



September 24, 2018

Donald Trump is not the inspiration Robbie Conal wants or needs. But the reality star president has kept the famed artist busier than he's been in years.

"I've done more painting this year, more than any other year in the last 15 years because of Trump and his people," the 73-year-old says.

Conal's [sketch-like caricatures](#) often satirize political figures with exaggerated, contorted expressions. Many include clever slogans or catchphrases, heavy on the puns.



ROBBIE CONAL

Portraits of Betsy-DeVos and John Bolton from the exhibit "Cabinet of Horrors" by artist Robbie Conal.

A native New Yorker, Conal moved to the Bay Area in the 1960s, just in time to participate in the hippie movement, and eventually left for Southern California when "Frisco became overrun." He now spends most days in his studio, feverishly creating art while watching MSNBC. "When Kellyanne Conway came up with 'alternative facts,' her nose started growing and I got going," Conal says during a phone interview from his home in the beachside town of Los Osos. "When I get mad enough so I can't take it anymore, I pick up a paint brush."

Conal is no stranger to political art. He initially found fame with his mid-1980s satirical look at Reagan-era politicians and cult figures. That exhibition, called "[Men With No Lips](#)," catapulted Conal onto the national art stage. But instead of sticking exclusively to galleries and major museums, where Conal continues to enjoy success, he printed his artwork on posters and took to the streets. Along with a renegade collection of volunteers, Conal affixed his posters to public spaces in cities like Washington and Los Angeles. This act of artistic resistance earned Conal the title "the grandfather of guerilla street art."

His latest exhibition, "Cabinet of Horrors," opens on October 13 at the Track 16 Gallery in Los Angeles. In the same vein as "Men with No Lips," "Cabinet of Horrors" will feature 24 satirical oil paintings of Trump, his cabinet and his inner circle. Three of the Trump paintings and eight of the cabinet paintings will become posters, plastered to public surfaces under the cover of darkness.



ROBBIE CONAL

Portraits of Jeff Sessions and Sarah Huckabee from the exhibit "Men With No Lips" by artist Robbie Conal.

"The street stuff is not exactly legal," Conal concedes, confessing that he and his volunteers usually post their street art on Friday nights because the Department of Public Works "doesn't get around to pulling them down until Monday."

"My mantra is 'Apply what you do best to what you care about most.' So I could draw and I could talk. And what I care about most, aside from my wife, our cats and all creatures great and small, is democracy — with a small d," Conal says.

"**Cabinet of Horrors**" is intended to reflect Conal's view of the aggressive horror of the Trump administration. His paintings will be framed in ornate faux gold frames, reminiscent of Trump's gilded tastes, and hung on black gallery walls. The artist also plans to unveil one other Trump-related portrait.

"The very last painting that I did, and I just finished it yesterday, is Melania. And I haven't told anybody or shown it to anybody," Conal says. "And I think it's gonna be the surprise."

https://altaonline.com/horrific-cabinets/?utm_source=Alta+Newsletter&utm_campaign=9dfe8ffa2d-9/20/2018+Case+Against+Junipero+Serra_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_bdb48a27fe-9dfe8ffa2d-72259353