

Henry GUNDERSON

*The Editorial Magazine,
Henry Gunderson's It's A Great Time to be Alive*

%041 %2020

Henry Gunderson's *It's A Great Time to be Alive*

February 1, 2020

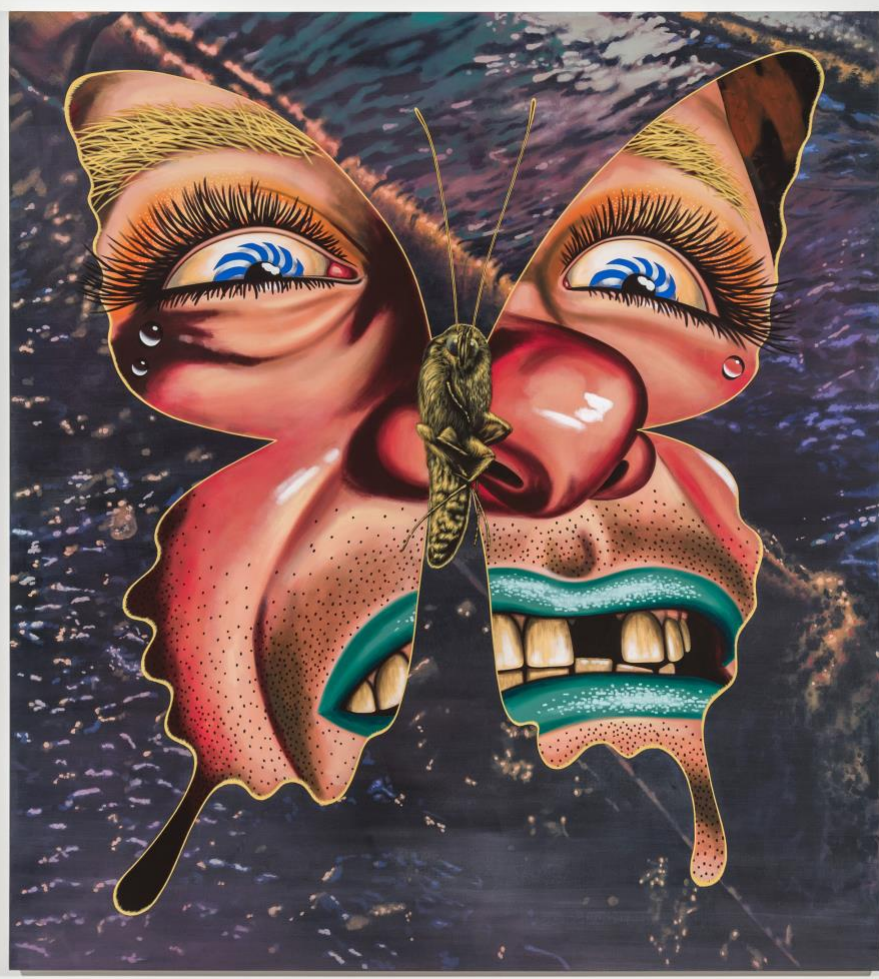


Photos courtesy of the artist and Derek Eller Gallery, New York

“It conjures up a taste of fantasy,” sang Nancy Sinatra and Lee Hazlewood, “I’ve been down so long, it looks like up to me.” The 60s tune that traces the complexities of perception is also the title of a book, and more recently, the title of a painting by artist, Henry Gunderson. Along with its partner painting, *Up So Long It Looks Like Down*, the diptych plays an important part in contextualizing the greater overarching narrative of Gunderson’s solo exhibition, *It’s a Great Time to be Alive*, at Derek Eller Gallery in New York. Featuring works that are at once surreal and photoreal—trompe l’oeil wrestlers, lustrous amber headlights mimicking the outline of glasses, plastic dolls emblematic of the American perception of inclusivity and diversity—the show’s theme grapples with, “perception and experience along with the commodification of human identity.” Gunderson harnesses ciphers from the collective visual vernacular to exemplify the potential and limits of identity and transformation of self, as dictated by the overbearing weight of preconceived socio-political frameworks. A self-portrait (and perhaps the catalyst for connecting the exhibition’s disparate heroes) *It’s Hard to See from Where I Am Standing* exists as a visual echoing of repeated selves, each figure’s vision obscured by another’s, though each ultimately bearing the same identity. Picaresque, uncanny, and vivid, *It’s a Great Time to be Alive* champions the individual’s potential for auteurship—if I must exist, how can I be? – Rebecca Storm



Plastic Dolls, 2019 acrylic and color pencil on canvas 54 x 66 inches



Down So Long it Looks Like Up, 2019 acrylic on canvas 68 x 62 inches



Photos courtesy of the artist and Derek Eller Gallery, New York



Up So Long it Looks Like Down, 2019 acrylic on canvas 68 x 62 inches



Scissor Lock, 2019 acrylic on canvas 96 x 36 inches



Impossible Grasp, 2019 acrylic on canvas 60 x 72 inches

It's a Great Time to be Alive, is open at Derek Eller Gallery until February 2nd.