

WEEKLY

LAS VEGAS



“Stevie Six” “Horn Too Largery Taylor Green,” “Stance Bass,” “Pebble Wilson” and “Laura Soft Tomb Raider”
Artists and Marianne Boesky Gallery New York and Aspen / Courtesy

The Haas Brothers Unleash a Fantasy-steeped Menagerie in Downtown Las Vegas

By: Geoff Carter
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Our sharply divided world has an inexplicable love of teams. Many of us aspire to be part of a group of disparate, yet complementary personalities, all pulling in the same direction toward something great. Take, for example, celebrated New York gallerist Marianne Boesky teaming up with indispensable local art consultant Michele C. Quinn for the purpose of bringing an exhibition by yet another team, brothers Simon and Nikolai Haas, to Las Vegas.

“We’ve wanted to do something together for a while, and it had to be this one,” Quinn says of Boesky x MCQ’s *Haas Vegas*, showing through March 25 in a pop-up space at Downtown’s Juhl building. “It’s so much fun.”

It certainly is that, and more. *Haas Vegas*, with its menagerie of beasts made largely from cast bronze, synthetic fur, porcelain and electric components, is less a gallery show than a rescue team, providing humor, wit and genuine wonder at a time when we sorely need it. If you stand beneath the exhibition’s two tallest pieces—the spindly-legged, Muppet-like “Snail Earnhardt Jr.” and “Snailor Moon,” 10-foot-tall friendoes made of hand-carved walnut, glass and faux Yeti Mongolian fur—and don’t feel immediately uplifted, just give it a minute. Snails do their best work at a deliberate pace.

The Brothers' own working style is visibly influenced by their upbringing—their parents, an opera singer and sculptor, raised them in culture-rich Austin, Texas—and by their current home in LA.

“Our practice is really steeped in fantasy,” Nikolai says. “That’s something we love about living in LA. ... It was just the middle of the desert, kind of no man’s land. And then something sprang up because of inventiveness and ideas and a dedication to fantasy and things that didn’t exist yet. Las Vegas is one of those places, too.”

“We grew up splitting tasks. A lot of twins I know are the same, where one becomes really good at one thing and the other has a complementary skill,” Simon explains. “Nikki is more of a sculptor and cartoonist ... and I’m very systems-focused and a little more analytical.”

Adds Nikolai, “What I usually say is that Simon is the awe and wonder that you find in nature, and I’m, like, the fart joke.”



Photo: Artists and Marianne Boesky Gallery New York and Aspen / Courtesy
“Squirt Russell” and “Ball McCartney”

That easy camaraderie and amazement with the natural world is readily evident in every one of *Haas Vegas*' pieces, from the titles on up. Take “New Jersey Turnspike,” a velveteen and walnut settee with headlight eyes, a red bulbous nose and a spine of softly-glowing colored bulbs—a hekin’ good boi that Hayao Miyazaki would be proud to claim as his own. A series of lamps crafted from blown glass and Pele de Tigre marble, with names like “Light Claw” and “Lady and the Lamp,” are clustered together like a family of bioluminescent creatures living at the bottom of the sea. And a pair of shiny tables—“Hexarcana” and “Hex Vagina Dining Table”—look like they were fashioned from an alien, metallic driftwood; you have to look closely to see the scores of hand-placed hexagonal brass tiles that cover them, a process that requires the better part of a year.

Even the staging of the pieces is beautiful. The Brothers' creatures and objects are placed against vivid green walls, a hue that both naturalizes an unfinished gray space and invites comparisons to the green-screen visual effects backdrops found on Hollywood soundstages. *Haas Vegas* is a true team effort between Boesky, Quinn and the Brothers, and viewers—and our city—share in their win.