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ALEXANDER CARVER
CELL
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Alexander Carver's work engages with the conditions of subjecthood and subjection where the body functions as raw material that is codified by and for the purposes of the state. Within the exhibition, these bodies are repurposed as fertilizer for an abundant image ecology.

Rendered in frottage with oil paint, silkscreen and hand cut stencils, the paintings incorporate dismembered bodies, appropriated legal texts, patents and architectural diagrams. The warped and smeared fragments of these motifs are suspended in a state of partial legibility against the white of the exposed gesso grounds so that the white of the canvas merges with the default white of the gallery space. Conversely, frottage is used to generate proto-digital renderings of objects placed behind the canvases.

For Cell, his first solo exhibition with the gallery, Carver chose the legal charter of the first private prison established in the United States, CoreCivic, and proposes a hypothetical scenario of a modular, self-sufficient, privately owned for-profit prison that is served by a mono-cultural banana plantation. To outline this scenario, Carver satirically engages the logic of the CoreCivic charter by utilizing three United States Patents. The first is for the production of prefabricated, modular prison cells that can be joined to create an infinitely expandable prison. The second patent demonstrates how banana plantations can be used as a passive source of energy by connecting the stalks of the trees via an electrical network. To complete the circuit of logic, Carver proposes using the wastewater generated by prison toilets to irrigate the banana plantation. In this way, the system exists in a feedback loop where the prisoners themselves, out of biological necessity to urinate and defecate, will supply power to the very prison which contains them. The final patent is then for the prison toilet system.

In his paintings, Carver also utilizes motifs like the image of a public execution from a German woodcut from 1474 titled 'The Fate of Three Homosexuals' and the lush fronds of a Cavendish Banana plant which is a commercially scaled genetically cloned crop. Mesmerizing braille-like meshes populate the works functioning sometimes as diagram, spatial coordinates, or like raised pores over the surface of the skin. Undergirding these images, legal texts and diagrams in impasto paint suggest that under law not all bodies are subjects and certain subjects don't have a physical body. It is this division that is reflected in the compartmentalized architecture of the prison cell, the split body and the cloned plants.

Alexander Carver (b. 1984) lives and works in New York. Alongside his painting practice, Carver works on a series of short films as well as his second feature-length film. Enveloped in rich visual language and seductive images, his work mirrors destabilized universes full of humor and contradictions.

Carver is a graduate of Cooper Union, New York and received his Masters in Fine Arts from Columbia University, New York. His work has been exhibited and screened in international venues and festivals including Lincoln Center, New York (2016); Berlinale, Berlin (2015); Biennale of Moving Image, Geneva (2014); Melbourne International Film Festival, Melbourne (2014); BAM, New York (2014); Locarno International Film Festival, Locarno (2013); Vancouver International Film Festival, Vancouver (2013).

