

August 26, 2020

On View

Self-Taught Artist William Scott's Fantastical Utopian Visions Get Their First New York Show in Over a Decade—See Them Here

The California artist's new show is now on view at Ortuzar Projects in New York.

Caroline Goldstein, August 26, 2020



William Scott, *Untitled* (2015). Courtesy of the artist and Ortuzar Projects.



William Scott, *Untitled* (2013). Courtesy of the artist and Ortuzar Projects.

As galleries and art institutions around the world begin to reopen, we are spotlighting individual shows—online and IRL—that are worth your attention.

“William Scott: It’s a Beautiful Day Outside” at Ortuzar Projects Through September 26, 2020

What the gallery says: “If there is a proclivity to label self-taught artists as ‘visionaries,’ it is also because a lack of specialized training promises the subversion of disciplinary boundaries; allowing perception through and beyond the rigid systems that structure—and sometimes stifle, or close down—our expectations for art, for each other, our imagination, and ourselves. The principal vision that all Scott’s works in various media propose is a utopian world that exists in no time like the present, but instead draws on memories of the past, and collective hope in the future, to finally make peace with the condition of human frailty.”

Why it's worth a look: It's the first New York show in more than a decade for the San Leandro, California-based artist William Scott. He is often categorized as a "visionary" or "outsider" artist because he is self-taught, the gallery says, but the lack of conventional training is a benefit to Scott's freewheeling and imaginative practice.

The exhibition, which spans decades of the artist's career, showcases Scott's layered and detailed imaginary worlds, populated by famous figures and ordinary people from his own life alike. The fantastical elements: citizen-ships that promise a "Skyline Friendly Organization" are bound for space with the likes of Janet Jackson, Curtis Johnson, and Deena Jones on board—a perfect sci-fi future in the artist's eyes.

A series of papier-mâché busts depicting Spiderman, Darth Vader, and Frankenstein's monster are actually masks worn by the artist to assume a new identity. In detailed compositions of city streets that could serve as animation cels, the artist commits every aspect of his environment to the page from various angles, the earthly realm he dwells in while he imagines the limitless future of his imagination.

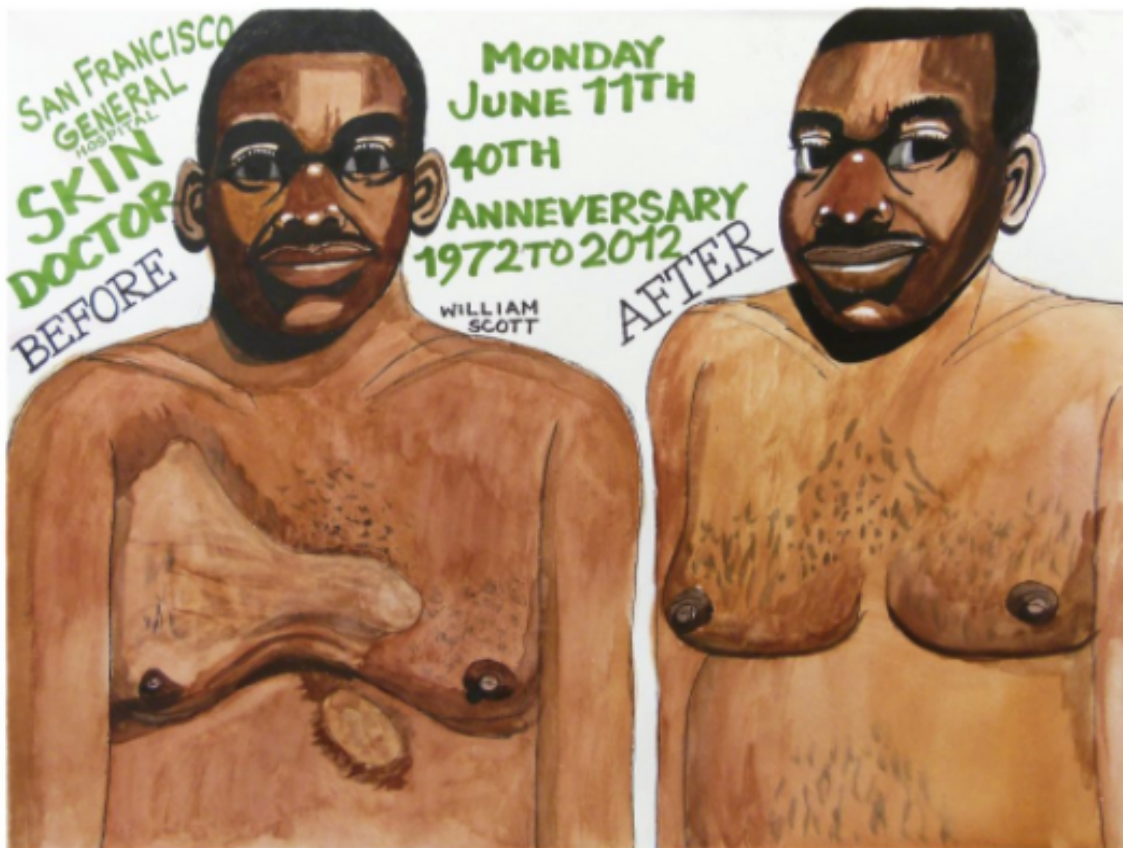
What it looks like:



Installation view of "William Scott: It's A Beautiful Day Outside." Courtesy of Ortuzar Projects.



William Scott, *Untitled* (2013). Courtesy of the artist and Ortuzar Projects.



William Scott, *Untitled* (2012). Courtesy of the artist and Ortuzar Projects.



William Scott, *Untitled* (2020). Courtesy of the artist and Ortuzar Projects.



Installation view, "William Scott: It's A Beautiful Day Outside." Courtesy of Ortuzar Projects.



William Scott, *Untitled* (ca. 2007). Courtesy of the artist and Ortuzar Projects.



Installation view, "William Scott: It's A Beautiful Day Outside." Courtesy of Ortuzar Projects.



William Scott, *Untitled* (2015). Courtesy of the artist and Ortuzar Projects.



William Scott, *Untitled* (2019). Courtesy of the artist and Ortuzar Projects.