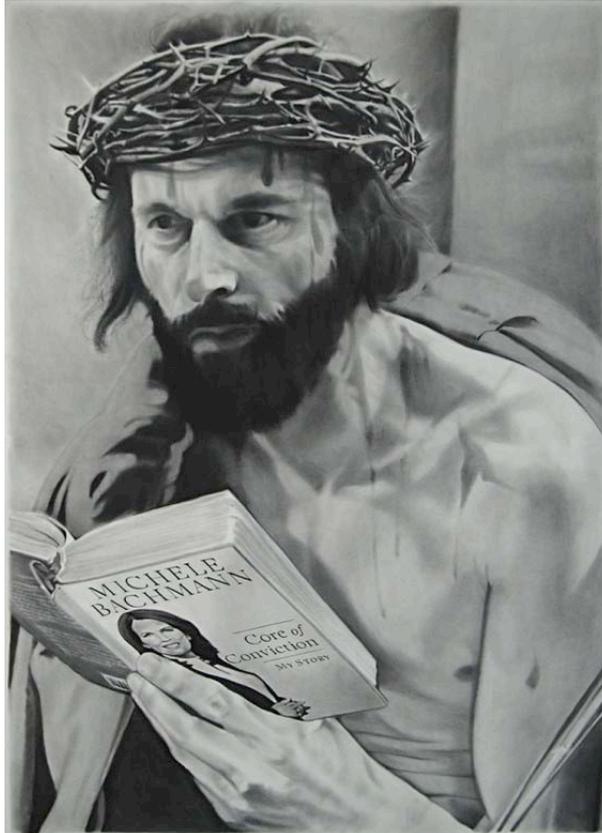


The New York Times

Eric Yahnker: 'Virgin Birth 'n' Turf
By KEN JOHNSON
Published: September 6, 2012



An exceptionally imaginative satirist, Eric Yahnker skewers a variety of usual and not-so-usual suspects from politics and entertainment in drawings great and small. He is also an ambitious, prolific and technically impressive draftsman. Working with graphite and colored pencil, he creates photo-derived images sometimes reaching over eight feet high. He lives in California, where he has worked as a professional animator, and this is his first solo show in New York.

Mr. Yahnker has a gift for visual one-liners. A large graphite-and-charcoal drawing called "Selected Reading (Core of Conviction)" pictures a beleaguered Jesus wearing his crown of thorns, intently studying a book by the conservative Republican representative Michele Bachmann called "Core of Conviction."

References to race and racism recur. Two of the largest works show pairs of hands holding open cans of food upside down. In each an index finger plunges into the can's contents. The label on one identifies its innards as "Bush's Baked Beans" and the other as collard greens, understood here as a signifier of black culture. Alluding thus to our present and recently past presidents, this indecorous diptych toys obliquely with pernicious stereotypes percolating in the American political unconscious.

Among several sculptural works are a pair of decorative dinner plates each bearing the photographic portrait of a poodle, one white, the other black. They are attached to either end of a wooden beam, with the name of each dog emblazoned in script on the lower part of the plate. The white one is named "L. L. Bean" and the black one "LL Cool J." The semiotics of that are awesome to contemplate.