

“State of the Union” is a new series of (mostly) black and white paintings by **Martin Mull**, who inserts his ironic wit into banal images of suburbia. His juxtapositions are carefully constructed from myriad source imagery - including family photographs from the 1950s - that lend the paintings an immediate sense of history. The tone is satirical while calling attention to psychological tensions between the subjects and their environs. Mull paints from photographs so as to render his images with exacting detail. While it is not always clear what element came from which source, it is evident that Mull adds to the source imagery. In “Family Man” a naked woman strolls down the sidewalk behind a man with a clown-like face. Large birds fluttering in the foreground add to the absurdity of the scene. In “Local Talent” an older man paints

an image of a suburban house while two girls do hand stands. Local talent has a double entendre - is it the talent of the girls or the painter? Mull’s paintings are often humorous and sometimes cutting, yet always give pause and ask viewers to think about the relationship between the past and the present (Samuel Freeman Gallery, Culver City).

Jody Zellen



Martin Mull, “Family Man,” 2013, oil on linen, 38 x 32”, is currently on view at Samuel Freeman.