



A GREAT BIG GIANT WORLD

Marc Dennis places mortal enemies cat and (Snoop) Dogg in an oil-on-linen painting that refers to the rapper's violent past and gang involvement.

Pussy Riot. "Cat Art Show" updates the feline form from cute to cutting

By Olivia B. Waxman

Images of cats are, by nature, adorable. Millions of online felinophiles flock to videos of cats riding Roombas, napping in unlikely places and looking grumpier than Dick Cheney at a MoveOn rally. So when the notion of cat art comes up, it's rarely taken seriously - except at 101/exhibit, a Los Angeles gallery that has contemporary artists in the appropriately named "Cat Art Show Los Angeles," opening Jan. 25.

These are not, however, the cuddly furballs of web memes and HANG IN THERE posters. One of the most evocative images at the gallery is *Radical Cat*, a work of spray paint and collage by Shepard Fairey, creator of the HOPE posters that became a symbol of Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign. He reimagines a black cat as a Black Panther Party member because, he tells TIME, "black cats have been unfairly vilified."

Elsewhere, photographer Steve Schapiro, who documented the *Godfather* trilogy behind the scenes, contributes an image of Marlon Brando as Vito Corleone stroking a gray cat. Marc Dennis includes another celebrity in his painting *A Great Big Giant World*, which depicts the rapper Snoop Dogg (a.k.a. Snoop Lion) in a velvet jacket, gazing at a framed portrait of a kitten - a comment on the Internet's fascination with felines. The blue-and-white background is inspired by the symbols of Snoop's former gang, the Crips, a curious juxtaposition of his rough past and the soft, innocent-looking creature, according to "Cat Art Show Los Angeles" curator Susan Michals.