



Julia Wachtel

*and*

28 March - 31 May 2026

Washington DC: von ammon co is pleased to announce the opening of *and*, a solo exhibition by New York based artist Julia Wachtel. This is Wachtel's third exhibition with the gallery.

In the press release for Wachtel's previous solo show with the gallery was a brief aside about *hypocrisy*; it makes sense that Wachtel, whose distinct style serves to dissect and analyze media and culture images, would use her third show with the gallery to focus intensely—and thus expand—on this theme, by way of an aggressively concise installation of just two panoramic paintings. Among the multiple modern definitions of hypocrisy is *dissembling*: Wachtel's paintings are, literally speaking, usually made of several separate but conjoined canvases—metaphorically speaking, they are always, somehow, about disguising or concealing one's own true motives or feelings under a thin membrane of conflicting ideology. Wachtel constructs her paintings from canvases with disparate painting styles: usually some that are mechanically produced via screen printing, and others that are painted by hand. Once assembled, these contrapuntal elements create micro-narratives that explore the tragic distance between belief and behavior.

The first painting in the show is titled *CyberChrist*. Wachtel has hand-painted a clip-art image of a maudlin Jesus on the way to Golgotha, cross in tow. As Christian nationalism has infiltrated the nation's capital from without and subsequently spread from therein, this graven image of voluntary submission to suffering has found purchase in many popular images: the pastor easily conveying the cross across the stage with the help of caster wheels; the fitness influencer bearing the cross while running on a treadmill. The very idea of a vectorized cartoon of Christ with the cross signifies a catastrophic drift from metaphor into the flawed realm of human behavior: Wachtel attenuates this absurd rift by smashing the image of Christ against the dreaded image of a Tesla Cybertruck and its proud owner. Once a metonym for sustainability—even for hope—Tesla's leadership has forced many of its remorseful buyers into involuntary hypocrisy as they defend their electric cars against vandalism with pleading bumper stickers. Through the use of these two images, whose original meanings have been irremediably inverted, Wachtel points to the difficulty of being a good steward to a powerful metaphor.

The second—and final—painting in the exhibition is titled *civil*. A perplexing image of Civil War reenactors is doubled and flipped 180 degrees on either end of the painting. In the photograph—which is screen printed in full color—Union and Confederate soldiers march in various directions, some together, some not; likely they are informally preparing for a reenactment. The doubling and (inverted) mirroring of the image endows it with a Classical symmetry, as this years-long, brutal, and inherently capitalistic war deserves the solemnity and frequent tributes it receives—mostly from the losing side. That said, it was a war fought by real soldiers who endured the requisite mortal suffering that once was the toll of a major conflict. Recently, a major tactical operation took place to capture and extradite a foreign leader: images of the situation room quickly spread afterwards, where there was a projection of a social media feed—and *emojis*—served as backdrop to the President. This flippant, puerile form of communication has found itself at the center of several significant historical events in the last twelve months—likely a lexicon developed for teenagers has finally infiltrated the highest echelons of diplomacy. At the center of *civil*, enshrined on both sides by these classically-literal *hypocrites* is a large, yellow *emoji* face, whose zany expression conveys a sort of carefree obliviousness. Like the eternally-childish war reenactor, it seems to be asking: *'LOL did i do that?'*

The city of Washington has been, and will be, in the midst of an ideological pantomime for quite a while. National Guard troops hang out, eat ice cream and drink coffee most days on the same city block as the gallery; giant hangings depicting the president are on government buildings; the programming of state-funded museums is under close moral review. Meanwhile, the residents of Georgetown install *RESIST* signs in their front yards and pledge allegiance to the *ANTI ELON TESLA CLUB*. This is Wachtel's first exhibition in our new gallery, which can be seen 24/7 through front-facing windows. The gnomic title of the exhibition, and, that coordinating conjunction, represents the widening gulf between the American's values and whether or not these values are reflected in their decisions. Wachtel's paintings of hypocrisy will stand as witness to this in the nation's capital for the typical duration of a commercial gallery show.