

VENUS

MANHATTAN LOS ANGELES

Laster, Paul, "From Pop to Punk: Peter Saul," *Time Out New York*, March 26, 2015.



"From Pop to Punk: Peter Saul" By Paul Laster



Courtesy the artist and Venus Over Manhattan
Peter Saul, *The Government of California*, 1969

Even before there was Pop Art, Peter Saul was making it. Born in 1934, Saul gave birth to his idiosyncratic style while living in Paris and Rome in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Inspired by MAD magazine, his paintings and works on paper observe American culture and its hypocrisies through a perverse prism, free-associating pop-cultural references with political themes. The works here date from 1961 to 1973 and come from the collection of Allan Frumkin, Saul's former dealer. Among the standouts, *Superman and Superdog in Jail* (1963) captures the Man of Steel and his faithful companion in a cell as the former squats on a toilet and the latter drinks from it. In *Superman in the Electric Chair* (1963) the superhero melts in the hot seat as a policewoman spews red dollar signs. Later in his life, Saul's compositions became harder-edged and bathed in Day-Glo hues. One painting depicts political activist Angela Davis crucified and pierced by jackknives carved with puns on the name Jesus (jee us, jezz ass, etc.). Grotesque and compelling, it speaks to Saul's career-long commitment to fighting injustice and speaking truth to power.—Paul Laster