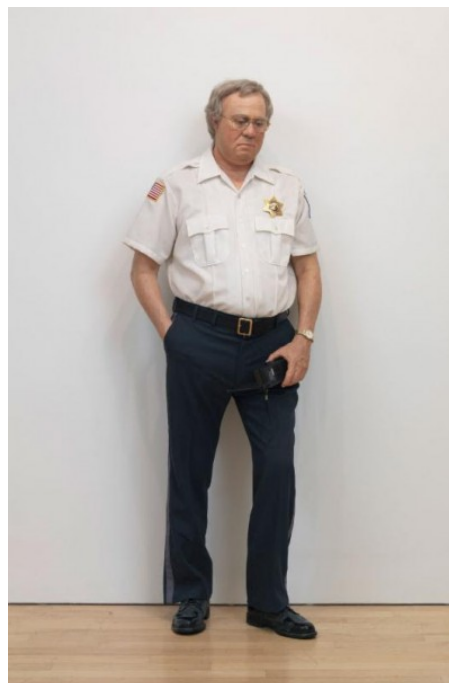


GAGOSIAN GALLERY

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**Sculptor Duane Hanson at Gagosian NYC – The Commonplace Refurbished  
as Surreal**

Emily Rae Pellerin



*Image courtesy of Gagosian Gallery*

*“I want to achieve a certain tough realism which speaks of the fascinating idiosyncrasies of our times,” Duane Hanson*

This past week, Gagosian New York presented American sculptor Duane Hanson’s Security Guard at its Park and 75th showroom. The seemingly vacant space is in fact inhabited by the art — art incognito, memetic and covert. A still life, made 3-dimensional and reinscribed from the objects at our lives’ peripheries to the very people in that same voided, passed-by realm of disregard. Yet, when Hanson creates his figures, these characters become deliberate—they themselves are the point, and, in a swapping of vulnerabilities, it is now the viewer made subject to their subtle, perhaps unnerving prowess, physicality, and scale.

Hanson’s life size models are known for their surreal uncanniness to the humane figure. And yet, differing from the lurid, hyper-commercialized ethos of the wax museum celebrity, Hanson’s intricately crafted models represent the blue collar, the common place, and the day-to-day. His Security Guard, 1990, is blithely askew, his hips un-squared and his shoulders slanting gently

downward with his distracted, perhaps disinterested (or even discontent) gaze. The avuncular countenance is by no means domineering, yet the figure is irrefutably demanding.

Hanson's intention seems to rely as much upon the strategic un-use of space as the space the figures themselves occupy. The art is forefronted, subtle but commanding, quotidian but novel, inert but entirely substantial.