

Justin Chance

*Again*

April 4 / May 2, 2025

Justin Chance is showing at Tara Downs again; it is his second show with the gallery.

It is a show that nods obliquely to things that happen again and again. Is the repetition cumulative, with tragedy upon tragedy until eventually, presumably, reaching a tipping point? Or does the redundancy have more of a numbing effect, rendering it all banal?

*Again* centers around a series of Chance's painterly quilts, which he makes by arranging felted wool in various colors to form compositions before enclosing them between translucent layers of dyed silk and cotton muslin. For quilts titled *Shock*, he dyed the wool and silk in an exhaust vat, dipping wool in a vat of yellow dye, then repeating this process again and again. This means that the yellow gets duller in each round, as the dye becomes exhausted. Depending on where you approach, the series becomes gradually duller, or gradually brighter—here asking, does repetition dull the effect, or intensify it? Another quilt, titled *Surprise*, brims with frogs and clowns and eyes and dots and most notably, exclamation points, its primary colors evoking a kind of menacing innocence.

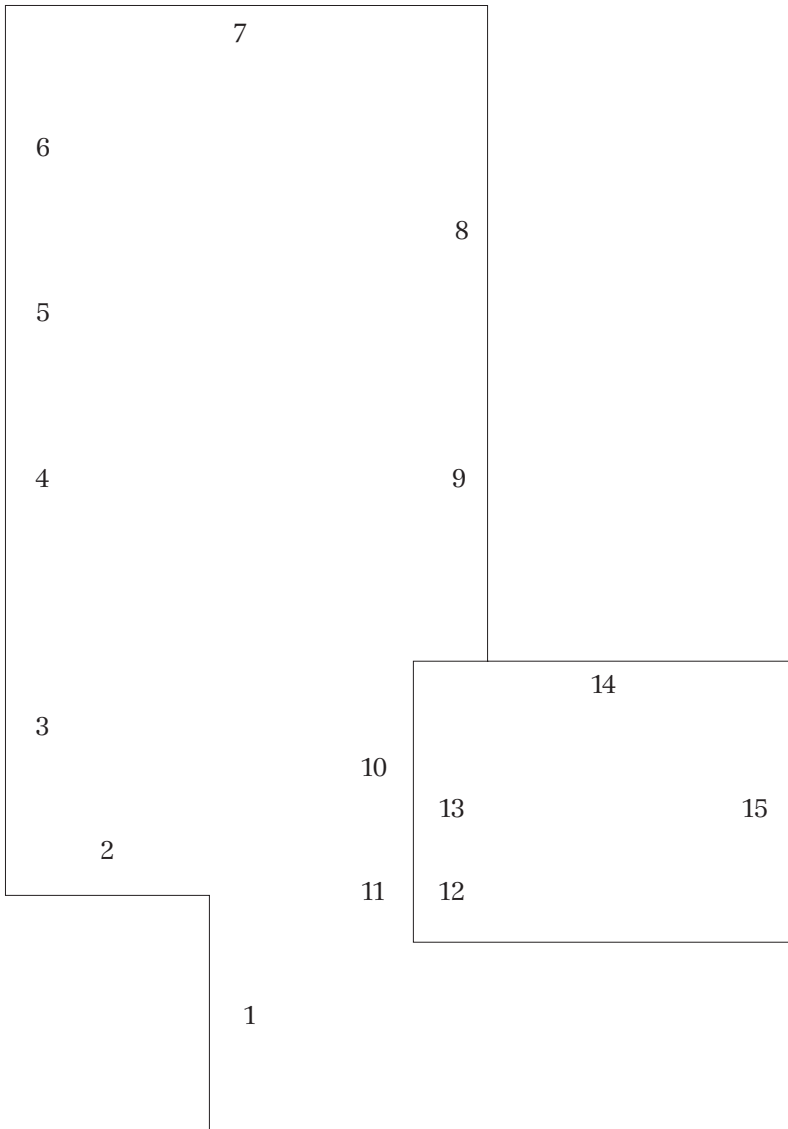
Meanwhile, motion activated speakers are scattered throughout the show eliciting cartoonish sounds of anguish (ow!) and shock (gasp!), with Chance as ever nailing the tricky tragicomic register. Mirrored clocks prompt reflection on the passage of time.

Violence and banality are referred to more specifically, though still obliquely, in works like *Police Shootings*, *Mass Murder*, *Cult Massacre*, *Religious Scandal*—Chance's hand embroidery of the years 2016, 1978, 2017, 2006, and 2014. Map the titular events onto the years: the murder of Philando Castille, the Jonestown Massacre, the Las Vegas mass shootings, the outing of evangelical figure Ted Haggard, and the murder of Michael Brown. The years are rendered in a serif font and wavy shape that resemble clip art; embroidered on dyed silk, the undulating numbers have a ghostly presence, yet are staunchly informational. Tragedies that shook the nation become one of many items on a list.

Of course, it is hard not to read the title *Again* or the interest in repetition, as a nod to the way 2025 is rehashing 2016 in the United States.

But there is something to the effect of Chance's show that feels new even as the subject matter is familiar. Uninterested in shocking a viewer into awareness, offering a space to mourn, or pointing a finger, *Again* captures the ways tragedies happen again and again, and yet daily life marches onward.

Throughout, there is gallows humor with its double registers. Six letters are missing from *Dystopia*, the four-by-seven-foot colored-pencil alphabet drawing Chance began working on in 2023. In it, A is for “Atrophy”, B is for “Bankruptcy”, C is for “Crisis”. But look closely, as there are 6 letters missing from this *Dystopia*: J, U, S, T, I, N.



- 1 Justin Chance, Hour, 2024-2025
- 2 Justin Chance, Untitled (Mirrored Clock), 2025
- 3 Justin Chance, Shock, 2025
- 4 Justin Chance, Screen, 2025
- 5 Justin Chance, MEMORY!, 2024-2025
- 6 Justin Chance, Untitled (Mirrored Clock), 2025
- 7 Justin Chance, Dystopia, 2023-2025
- 8 Justin Chance, Days, Weeks, 2024-2025
- 9 Justin Chance, Shock, 2025
- 10 Justin Chance, Shock (Diagram; Depiction of Blunt Force Trauma), 2023
- 11 Justin Chance, One Way, 2025
- 12 Justin Chance, Again, 2025
- 13 Justin Chance, Police Shootings, Mass Murder, Cult Massacre, Religious Scandal, 2025
- 14 Justin Chance, The Minutes, 2025
- 15 Justin Chance, Surprise, 2024-2025