

Life & Arts

FTWeekend

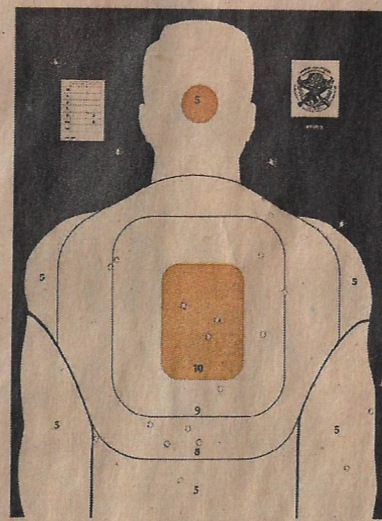
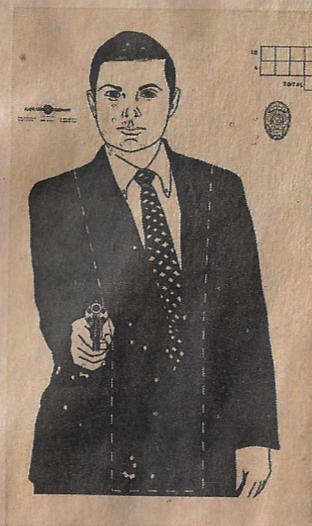
SNAPSHOT

'LA Gun Club' (2016) by Jane Hilton

More than 100 targets are available to choose from at the Los Angeles Gun Club, from minimalist human forms to cartoonish bad guys. In *LA Gun Club*, a photographic series that documents shooting range targets – now on show at New York's Palo Gallery – British photographer Jane Hilton adds to her 25 years of studies documenting the shadier areas of Americana.

The shot-up targets and accompanying text detailing each shooter's firearm, profession and motivation represent a cross-section of the Californian gun-owning community. Shooters include bodyguards, brain surgeons and beauty therapists – some there for a birthday treat, others on a date night. One range master comments: "I own many guns. I just love looking at them."

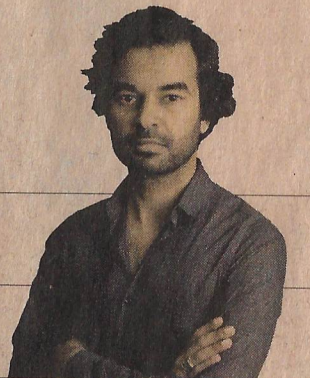
Alexander James
'LA Gun Club' is at Palo Gallery, New York, to March 23



The parable of Soho House

Janan Ganesh

Citizen of nowhere



A friend of mine first entertained doubts that Soho House was cool when he saw four alumni of his school there. "Accountant, accountant, solicitor, accountant". Respectable lines of work, I think. The bohemian distaste for conventional wealth is foolish. But there is lots of it, lots of resentment in return and no understanding history without a sense of this eternal friction between people with cachet and people with cash.

I am in the Bangkok branch of Soho House, escaping the heat. There is no outward sign of the troubles said to be afflicting this overstretched empire of a members' club. Still, the recent fuss about whether it has let in too much of the wrong sort has revealed something. The most important social tensions are within the elite – not, as a decade of populism has pretended, between the elite and the people.

The person likeliest to tear down a nation's establishment is a half-member of it. He or she is close enough to have felt its condescension (which must be largely theoretical for a total outsider) and to know its weak points. Donald Trump, disdained as a bridge-and-tunnel vulgarian for all his material privilege, is the most famous example. But there are others. It wasn't just England's deindustrialised north and Midlands that voted for Brexit. So did the non-London south-east, an affluent place in the main, but also one teeming with the sort of white-collar commuters who wouldn't have made the Soho House cut in the past.

The modern wave of Anglo-

American populism still hasn't thrown up a leader who is, like Nixon, of the people. Tucker Carlson's father was US ambassador to the Seychelles. Boris Johnson's life tour – Eton, Brussels, Islington – sounds nice. Nigel Farage is a private-school ex-commodities broker. Each appeals to a voter I have met a lot over the past decade, and never used to: the frustrated elitist. That is, someone who worked their way into the economic 1 per cent or thereabouts, just to find the cultural 1 per cent above them.

If Soho House achieved nothing else, it should have revealed to the

The most important social tensions are within the elite – not between the elite and the people

Marx-minded that power isn't all economic. Imagine that you are a successful IT consultant who sends in a membership application. You have taken risks, hired people, made a mint and paid more in tax than you could ever get back in public services. If you don't get in, you have, in a sense, less social clout than a freelance UX designer in a shared flat who does. If you do, your presence appals cultural commentators into pronouncing Soho House the "McDonald's of member's clubs". There is zero case for sympathy here. (Unless you end up at 5 Hertford Street.) But I do wonder where all that pique and resentment goes.

Class war is real, then. But it is intra-class, not just inter-class. The point seems to hold among nations as among individuals. The angriest revisionist power in the world, Russia, is not a poor or weak state, just a demoted one; not a complete stranger to the west, just on its neglected edge. Whatever the setting, social or geopolitical, watch out for the relative loser in life, not just the absolute one. (Who, after all, lacks resources to act.) Watch out for the small fracture and schism in a nation, not just the clash of total opposites.

There isn't a greater political painting than Jacques-Louis David's *The Death of Marat*, in which one leader of the French Revolution lies slain at the hands of another. Even aside from the concentration and finality of the image – so much like a sculpture – it is an insight into the narcissism of small differences. It is wiser about human conflict than a soppy Goya or Delacroix piece about the oppressed versus the oppressors.

Long ago, as a gauche youth, I was taken to the Shoreditch branch of Soho House on a date, where I decided, with a coldness that unnerves me now, that I would be there by right and not by invitation one day. Well, apologies for the effect I've had. Accept this advice as compensation. Wherever the action is now (House of Koko?) someone like that is knocking on the door and being refused. Tell him all you want that he is still in or near the elite. Just don't assume he will go quietly.

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Sorry, love, One Day your prince will probably not come

Jo Ellison

