

Alexander Gray Associates

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Joan Semmel, *Untitled*, 1971, oil on canvas, 70h x 80w in (177.8h x 203.2w cm)

Art | Basel
Basel | June | 13-16 | 2013

Art Feature Sector | Booth G4

Alexander Gray Associates is pleased to announce the Gallery's participation in Art Basel 2013 art fair. The Gallery's exhibition features works by Joan Semmel, introducing the pioneering feminist painter to a European audience for the first time since 1969. Spanning Semmel's groundbreaking 40 year career, the presentation includes paintings from iconic bodies of work in which the artist explores feminist themes, sexuality, and aging through formal experimentation.

During the height of First-wave Feminism, Semmel began the first *Erotic Series*, an investigation of figuration depicting couples in coital positions. The artist's training in abstraction is apparent in her masterful use of expressive lines and color, evident in *Untitled* (1971). Moving away from figurative abstraction, *Indian Erotic* (1974), from Semmel's second *Erotic Series*, assumes a more voyeuristic perspective, marking a pivotal shift towards photography-driven images.

In works from the mid to late 1970s, Semmel turns the camera onto herself. *On the Grass* (1978), a nude self-portrait, embodies Semmel's command of the female gaze, pushing against idealized representations of the female body. In decades since, the artist has incorporated a variety of tools to render images that question perceptions of female representation. In *Knees Together* (2003), Semmel uses the camera lens and mirrors, subverting traditional depictions of the aging process.

Semmel (b.1932) studied at the Cooper Union, Pratt Institute and the Art Student's League of New York. In the 1960s, She began her painting career in Spain and South America, where she experimented with abstraction. Semmel returned to New York in the early 1970s, when her practice turned towards figurative paintings, many with erotic themes in response to pornography, popular culture, and concerns around representation. Semmel's museum exhibitions include: *Me. Myself. Naked* at the Paula Modersohn-Becker Museum, Bremen, Germany; *Joan Semmel: A Lucid Eye* at the Bronx Museum of the Arts (2013); *Shifting the Gaze* at the Jewish Museum (2010); *Rebelle* at the Museum of Modern Art Arnhem, The Netherlands (2009); *Solitaire: Lee Lozano, Sylvia Plimack Mangold, Joan Semmel* at the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH (2008); and the touring exhibition *WACK! Art and the Feminist Movement*, MoCA, Los Angeles (2007). Semmel's paintings are in the permanent collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX; Orange County Museum of Art, CA; Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, VA; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC; The Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY; the Jocelyn Art Museum, Omaha, NE; the Jewish Museum, New York; and the Brooklyn Museum, New York. She is the recipient of numerous awards and grants, including the Women's Caucus for Art Lifetime Achievement Award 2013, Anonymous Was a Woman, and the National Endowment for the Arts awards. She is Professor Emeritus of Painting at Rutgers University, NJ.

Alexander Gray Associates is a contemporary art gallery in New York. The Gallery presents exhibitions focused on artists who emerged in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Influential in political, social and cultural spheres, these artists are notable for creating work that crosses geographic borders, generational contexts and artistic disciplines. Alexander Gray Associates is a member of the Art Dealers Association of America. Gallery hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM. July: Tuesday-Friday, 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM.