



FRIEZE ART FAIR

Joan Semmel, *Horizons*, 1981, oil on canvas, 78h x 120w in (198.12h x 304.8w cm)

Frieze New York 2018 | May 2–6, 2018 | Booth E12

Randall's Island Park, New York

Alexander Gray Associates presents an exhibition of paintings and works on paper by seven international women artists, featuring recent and historical pieces by **Polly Apfelbaum**, **Heidi Bucher**, **Harmony Hammond**, **Lorraine O'Grady**, **Betty Parsons**, **Joan Semmel**, and **Valeska Soares**.

Polly Apfelbaum's artistic practice is distinguished by a hybridized aesthetic that fuses traditions of painting, craft, and installation. In her recent gouaches entitled *The Potential of Women* (2017), she draws inspiration from the 2017 Women's March, creating compositions that appropriate Rudolph de Harek's cover design for the 1963 book *The Potential of Woman* to forward a message of female empowerment.

Heidi Bucher's works rearticulate the connection between materiality, space, and the body. Her process of casting not only architectural details like floors, doors, and cupboards, but also entire rooms in gauze sheets soaked in latex rubber, resulted in the creation of sculptures that are at once spectral and corporeal. As in *Untitled (floor fragment from the Ahnenhaus)* (1980–1982), she often made casts from her family's home. Invoking narratives of memory, trauma, decay, and transformation, these works emerge as charged examinations into the nature of home.

A pioneer of feminist and queer discourse, **Harmony Hammond's** recent paintings' focus on materiality and the indexical derives from and remains in conversation with her feminist work of the 1970s. In *Naples Grid* (2015), she grommets a field of holes into the canvas. These holes physically open up the painting surface, alluding to layers, spaces, and histories buried below, as well as to body orifices. For Hammond, "It's about what's hidden, muffled, covered up or over, pushing up from underneath, asserting itself, suggesting agency and voice."

Lorraine O'Grady's practice spans a variety of mediums and explores the cultural construction of identity. *Untitled (Mlle Bourgeoise Noire Shouts Out Her Poem)* (1980-83/2009) is an image from O'Grady performance as Mlle Bourgeoise Noire. Created as a critique of the racial segregation still prevailing in the mainstream art world in the 1980s, as Mlle Bourgeoise Noire, O'Grady stormed art galleries and museums in a dress made of debutante gloves, shouting poetry and whipping herself with cat-o-nine tails, giving artists and institutions "a piece of her mind."

Betty Parsons was an abstract painter and sculptor who is best known as a dealer of mid-century art. Throughout her storied career as a gallerist, she maintained a rigorous artistic practice, painting during

weekends in her Long Island studio. In *June #9* (1971), Parsons presents a dynamic composition of blue and gray forms against a vibrant red ground that evokes the warmth and brilliant light of summer.

Since the 1970s, **Joan Semmel** has centered her practice around issues of the body. *Horizons* (1981) presents two versions of the same figures to viewers, one painted realistically and one rendered in an expressionistic style. As Semmel expands, “[these figures] are almost like internal and external views of the self that combine a perceptual image with the ambition and striving of the emotive ego.” Recent works like *Red Line* (2018), further develop the artistic trajectory of *Horizons*. Marrying realism with expressionism, they celebrate color and flesh while highlighting the aging process through an accurate portrayal of Semmel’s own body.

Utilizing tools of minimalism and conceptualism, **Valeska Soares**’ practice embraces emotion and humanity, mining territories of love, loss, and memory. In *Sugar Blues (I)* (2017), part of an ongoing series, Soares stacks empty candy boxes, evoking both modular neo-constructivist Brazilian sculpture and feelings of longing associated with past indulgences. Every box recalls the sensory experience of unwrapping, tasting, and smelling the treats they once contained. Each piece in the *Sugar Blues* series can only be made when more candy has been eaten, thus making the work a sort of intimate diary that tracks both the passage of time and consumption.