

# BIENVENU STEINBERG & J

## *Looks Good: On Paper* *Collaged Drawn Painted Printed*

Jan, 19 - Feb, 18, 2023

Katrina Andry  
William Cordova  
Mia Enell  
Mahmoud Hamadani  
Sean Mellyn  
Jane Rosen  
Anita Steckel

Andrea Belag  
Lydia Dona  
Allison Gildersleeve  
Brad Kahlhamer  
Jill Moser  
Mika Rottenberg  
Ouattara Watts

Marina Berio  
Tracey Emin  
Max Gimblett  
James McMullan  
Vernando Reuben  
David Salle

Bienvenu Steinberg & J welcomes an exhibition of works on paper by a diverse group of artists that crosses generations and boundaries, not solely geographic. All 20 participants have demonstrated, within their individual practices, a serious commitment to paper as a ground for an extensive range of media and experimentation.

The show provides vivid contrasts and engaging comparisons. Standing as nearly polar opposites are Mahmoud Hamadani's cool elegant minimalist ink drawings and Vernando Reuben's richly layered depictions of idealized black queer cruising utopias. Four artists whose works explore distinctive forms of abstraction while sharing a common allegiance to highly colored surfaces are Andrea Belag, Lydia Dona, Max Gimblett and Jill Moser. Belag's gestural brushstrokes are a counterpoint to Moser's carefully structured compositions. Dona's muscular vibrancy simultaneously complements and contrasts with the spiritual joyousness expressed in Gimblett's watercolors.

Several of the figurative artists featured in the show exemplify virtuosity in the draftsmanship they employ. James McMullan's fluid life studies of men possess a strong sense of intimacy and immediacy. Jane Rosen's works, reflecting her ongoing concerns with the balance of nature and culture, share the spontaneity often experienced in an artist's sketchbook with a nearly classical sculptural stillness. Marina Berio's charcoal drawings also manifest a sense of classicism. Berio makes use of photographic negatives as stencils to perfectly portray lighting fixtures seen in other artists' studios.

Allison Gildersleeve, Brad Kahlhamer and Ouattara Watts all draw upon their personal histories to create images that encapsulate forms of nostalgia and emotional poignancy. Gildersleeve's large scale

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paintings on paper integrate memories of the interior and landscape surrounding a centuries old farmhouse in Connecticut where she was raised. Kahlhamer's examination of his personal heritage references Native American history and notions of authenticity and representation within the discourse of Native American art. For Watts, the overlap of ancient mysticism and modern science, African heritage, and a European art education, generates imagery that transcends borders.

Deploying mixtures of irony and cynicism, William Cordova and Mika Rottenberg present ongoing dialogues concerning social and cultural systems. Cordova frequently focuses on the ephemeral and the transitional, impermanence and change. Rottenberg's work has notably investigated systems of production and the generation of value in a capitalist world. Her works on paper frequently illuminate an absurdist perception of the world. Two artists whose images also border on the surreal are Mia Enell and Sean Mellyn. Enell's dreamlike sketches are responses to the eccentricity of her inner life. In Mellyn's meticulously crafted collage drawings, the eye of the artist is frequently implanted like a hidden camera surveilling the world.

Often regarded as icons of feminist sexuality and vulnerability, Tracey Emin and the late Anita Steckel provide different views of women's bodies. Where the figure in Emin's work is hunched over and apparently retreating from the viewer, Steckel's nude figure is exuberantly confrontational. Katrina Andry, primarily known as a master printmaker, seeks to provoke viewers into examinations of their personal biases in issues of race and gender. Andry's woodcuts examine the interplay of sexism and racism in the life of communities.

Monumental lithographs by David Salle complete the exhibition. Produced between 2014 and 2018 at Houston Fine Arts Press under the supervision of Richard Newlin, they combine lovingly rendered portraits of women with abstracted and appropriated images in Salle's renowned manner and have never been previously exhibited in a New York gallery.

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