

David Lewis is pleased to present Barbara Bloom, *A Picture, A Thousand Words*.

The exhibition is the artist's first with the gallery. It is her first exhibition in New York since her celebrated exhibition *As it were... So to Speak* at the Jewish Museum in 2013 and her first gallery exhibition in New York in seven years.

Bloom's *A Picture, A Thousand Words* consists of seven sculptures.

The inspiration comes from a Bolaño short story, called *Labyrinth*. The story consists of Bolaño's extrapolations upon an anonymous photograph of eight French intellectuals seated at a cafe table.

A picture. A thousand words.

Each of Bloom's sculptures follows, like *Labyrinth*, from a photograph. Each photograph is 'framed' by its sculpture, which continues and complicates its dynamics. And each sculpture includes a mirror, or mirrors.

Four works derive from photographs of Hollywood icons:

1. *Door Jam*. Photo: Elliot Erwin. 1962. Sofia Lauren and Anthony Perkins dancing in Paris during the filming of *Five Miles to Midnight*. Sofia and Anthony are dancing together but they are in separate worlds even though they are in the same room. Sofia is voluptuous and three-dimensional; Anthony appears miniaturized, two-dimensional. This awkwardness mirrors their public personas and personal relationship. The door jamb extends and re-enacts this scenario: you encounter the photograph in the mirror.

2. *Beacons (Dick and Liz)*. Eve Arnold photograph of Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor at a pub in Shepparton, UK. 1963.  
This work is about Liz and Dick's beacon-like, beaming, insane eyes. Beacons of light beaming out of the dark.

3. *Vanity*. Joan Crawford. Eve Arnold photograph of Joan Crawford in her dressing room. Hollywood, 1959.  
"If a photographer cares about the people before the lens and is compassionate, much is given. It is the photographer, not the camera, that is the instrument." (Eve Arnold)  
The photograph is framed *in* the vanity. The framing allows you to see the photograph; the sculpture is a place to look at a photograph. An abstracted sculptural version of ta-dal, the embodiment of public adoration and fame. A movie-star place.

4. *Foursome*. Bruce Davidson photograph of (L-R) Simone Signoret, Yves Montand, Marilyn Monroe, and Arthur Miller at a dinner party at a bungalow at the Beverly Hills Hotel. 1960.  
How often do you have a perfect embodiment of quadruple unrequited love? A Mexican stand-off in glancing. Marlyn Monroe is looking at her husband Arthur Miller (their marriage is unhappy); Arthur looks at Simone Signoret (the embodiment of a movie star who is French, intellectual, smart—everything that Marilyn is not); Simone is looking at her husband Yves Montand, whom she sees gazing at the beautiful Marilyn Monroe, with whom he will soon fall in love.

Two of the works draw upon modernist literature:

5. *The Ideal Home*.

This one is all about being Bloom. And: a depiction of an ideal world.

Three images from left to right:

–In James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Leopold Bloom describes an ideal home (slipping into bizarre particularity.) In Perec’s *Life: A User’s Guide*, the interior decorator Henri Fleury includes a doll-house version of Leopold Bloom’s description of this ideal home in a house he decorates. This second text is set inside the original text from *Ulysses*.

–Anonymous photograph of James Joyce examining a text with a magnifying glass. The photograph includes a .46€ commemorative stamp depicting Georges Perec. Issued in France, 2002.

–Layering of images of ideal homes, including a drawing by Barbara Bloom’s father of an ideal home.

6. *Mrs. and Mr. V.N.* Carl Mydans photograph of Véra Nabokov with reflection of her husband Vladimir Nabokov at their home in Ithaca, New York, 1958.

Mr. and Mrs. genius. The photograph of Véra typing is in the typewriter. Véra is the perfect artist’s wife and is brilliant. Vladimir is in the picture but disappears from its sculptural re-creation. The magician is in the mirror.

And:

7. Anonymous photograph of Christine and Léa Papin. Mirror, sister; sister; mirror. The psychological complexity of sisters who look alike. French maids who murdered their employer’s wife and daughter on 2 February, 1932. The murder and trial proved hugely influential on French intellectuals, including Sartre, Genet (whose play *Les Bonnes* was based on the sisters), Eluard, Cixous, and Lacan. A picture; a thousand words. A sudden flash of lightning, a rumbling of (Joycean) thunder on the horizon.