

BLOUINARTINFO

New Section for 'Sex Work' at Frieze London 2017

October 07, 2017



Mary Beth Edelson, Double Shells ('Woman Rising' series), 1973, Oil and ink on silver gelatin print, Paper Dimensions 10x8 inches 25.4x20.3 cm; Framed Dimensions 43.2x38.1x4.4 cm (Artist & David Lewis, New York)

Frieze London is hosting a new section for 2017, "Sex Work: Feminist Art & Radical Politics," curated by Alison Gingeras. The newest addition to the fair contextualizes the age-old practice of feminist art and radical politics continued through contemporary art makings and aesthetic expressions.

The section hubs select feminist artists and radical art practitioners who happen to be women, not genderized yet but on a categorized basis. The artists featured reside on the extreme edge of feminist practices since the 1960s along with their supporting galleries including: Galerie Andrea Caratsch presenting Betty Tompkins; Richard Saltoun presenting Renate Bertlmann; Salon 94 presenting Marilyn Minter; Blum & Poe presenting Penny Slinger; and Hubert Winter presenting Birgit Jürgenssen.

"Sex Work," as Gingeras puts across, will "pay homage to artists who transgressed sexual mores, gender norms and the tyranny of political correctness and were frequently the object of censorship in their day" in addition to "highlighting the seminal role galleries have played in exhibiting the radical women artists who were not easily assimilated into mainstream narratives of feminist art."

The featured galleries, owing to their extreme expressions “often blazed a trail” for museum exhibitions yet did not curb their course as she explains. Several figures in the selection have been quoted to be ‘too transgressive’ to be showcased in anthologizing museum shows including, Renate Bertlmann, Penny Slinger, Birgit Jürgenssen and Betty Tompkins, which to her, “arguably forged a consensual canon for important feminist art” that she curates with the dare.

Galleries participating featuring the mutinying artists include, Air de Paris, Paris, featuring Dorothy Iannone; Baldwin Gallery focusing Aspen Marilyn Minter; Blum & Poe, Los Angeles, showcasing Penny Slinger; The Box, Los Angeles, featuring Judith Bernstein; Galerie Andrea Caratsch, St. Moritz, presenting Betty Tompkins; Karma International, Zurich, focusing on works of Judith Bernstein; David Lewis, New York, sharing works of Mary Beth Edelson; lokal_30, Warsaw, portraying Natalia LL; Regen Projects, Los Angeles, showing works of Marilyn Minter; Salon 94, New York, promoting Marilyn Minter; Richard Saltoun, London, featuring Renate Bertlmann; and finally Galerie Hubert Winter, Vienna, presenting Birgit Jürgenssen.

American visual artist Dorothy Iannone stretches the boundaries of feminism and has lived and worked in different European cities on her explorations since 1966. Birgit Jürgenssen swayed her works through emancipatory potential of Surrealism within the context of 1970s feminism. Jürgenssen began her artistic career in 1968 and her works play on the diverse realm of feminism in arts. Marilyn Minter represented by Baldwin Gallery, Regen Projects and Salon 94, says, “I think my paintings have less to do with so-called porn and more to do with freedom.”

Renate Bertlmann is an Austrian feminist artist with her focus centered on the issues surrounding sexuality and gender, with her body often serving as the medium. Natalia LL’s practice focuses on photography and film. Natalia LL, who lived her early years in Poland, faced continual ideological and moral censorship only to be reddened by it with her international fame with the advent of mid-1970s. Judith Bernstein’s art employs explicit sexual imagery with astounding graphic impact directly confronting gender inequality and social injustice. Mary Beth Edelson is a celebrated American artist, activist, and pioneer of the first-generation Feminist art movement. Betty Tompkins’s monumental, photorealistic and detailed images of sexual intercourse through her ‘Fuck Paintings’ announced her unashamed approach to female desire and sexuality.

Penny Slinger uses the tools of the surrealists in her collage practices to probe the feminine psyche. The section “Sex Works” is complemented by A.I.R. Gallery, a feminist artist-run organization that has been fundamental in the careers of Mary Beth Edelson, Judith Bernstein and many more.

The new addition in the Fireze London has been long due and its timely incarnation is surely adding a different dimension to the functionality of Frieze Fairs through October 8 at Regent’s Park, London.