

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JILL LEVY

Curated by Benjamin H.D. Buchloh

31 March - 14 May 2022

Opening Reception: Thursday 31 March, 6 – 8pm

Librairie Marian Goodman is pleased to present Jill Levy's first solo exhibition, curated by German art critic and historian Benjamin H.D. Buchloh. The presentation brings together a group of eight paintings and thirteen drawings created over the past two years. The colorful oil paintings and the graphite drawings on paper are characterized by their forms between abstraction and figuration.

In the short essay entitled "Jill Levy: Painting, as if..," included in the brochure accompanying the exhibition, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh recognizes the artist's singular ability to create works that are distinct in genre and palette:

"Levy's uncanny hybridity of a latent figuration and abstract form, a friction that is striking in the drawings, more subtle when painted, engenders a sense of pertinent discomfort. In some paintings this uneasy relationship of opposite elements generates an uncommon figuration that seems to protrude as if -- though almost unwarranted -- irrepressibly necessary. An analogous ambiguity arises from Levy's chromatic intensity, similarly disjointed from all conventional motivations of depiction, assaulting its spectators as if color as spontaneous mimesis of the natural world had never met its ends, or had never been delegated to obsolescence by artists and theoretically minded critics alike.

Only after a few moments of a more careful contemplation does one realize that Levy's apparent celebration of color is similarly marred -- in exact analogy to the subtle and at times disturbing protrusion of figuration -- by a deep ambivalence, as if the painter knew full well that after Duchamp and Warhol, mimetic chromatic intensity cannot be but naïve, if not fraudulent.

And no less in the registers of Levy's graphite drawings -- either subtly foreshadowing or darkly reminiscent of somatic formations -- do we encounter a similar hesitation, if not an outright resistance to gestural or figurative resolution. Recalling Eva Hesse's early drawings, these somatic fragments are suspended in similar failures -- or refusals -- to decide whether the subject's hand should obey the demands of the mechano-morphic matrix of externally imposed control, or act up as if the painterly subject could actually still mobilize an internal biomorphic opposition of desire."

Jill Levy (b. 1976, Johannesburg, South Africa) lives and works in London, where she emigrated in 1980. She first studied at the University of Brighton between 1995 and 1998 and then joined the Royal Academy of Arts -- Royal Academy Schools in London where she received a master's degree in 2001.

Benjamin H.D. Buchloh is an art critic, historian and writer. He served as the Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art at Harvard University's Faculty of Arts and Sciences between 2005 and 2021, teaching courses on the history of Weimar culture, and Post-WWII American and European art history. Buchloh was co-curator of the retrospective exhibition of the work of Gerhard Richter at the Metropolitan Museum/Met Breuer, New York in 2020. He was awarded the Golden Lion for Contemporary Art History and Criticism at the Venice Biennale in 2007.

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