

Two, Hairy: Art Green and Gladys Nilsson

For the 2018 edition of Expo Chicago, the gallery presents *Two, Hairy*, an exhibition of paintings, watercolors, and drawings by Art Green and Gladys Nilsson.

Green and Nilsson first met during the mid-1960s as students at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1965, along with fellow classmates James Falconer, Jim Nutt, Suellen Rocca, and Karl Wirsum, Green and Nilsson formed the seminal group the Hairy Who. Since then, they have remained close, sharing influences and exchanging ideas. For both artists Surrealism and Pop were important touchstones, as well as legendary Chicago painter Ivan Albright. Their works are meticulously constructed, densely layered compositions—Green

and Nilsson share a similar horror vacui, possibly the most extreme case of any of the Hairy Who-ers. The first-ever comprehensive survey exhibition of these six artists' work, *Hairy Who? 1966–1969*, is on view concurrently at the Art Institute of Chicago through January 6, 2019.

In his paintings, Green unleashes a barrage of images—ice cream cones, wood grain patterns, burning candles, and perfectly polished fingernails, to name a few—in thin layers of oil paint, illusionistically “stacked” one on top of the other. In works such as *Even Odds* (2016), Green orchestrates his eccentric panoply into a kind of visual pandemonium. It is left to the viewer, then, to decipher meaning from the artist's circuitous, often puzzling juxtapositions.

Nilsson employs a similar strategy in her watercolors. In each of them, sinuous lines are as often her subject as frieze-like groupings of distorted figures or the brightly hued patterns of their surroundings. In the monumental *chic.con.co.* (1986), ostensible subject matter is the construction of a building by a distinct swarm of female steelworkers. Yet, in fact, the careful inclusion of tens of different-sized “tangential” figures, all of whom twist and squirm in different manners, creates such a strong visual impression that it overrides all else. Viewers are forced to focus on only one of them at a time.

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to represent Art Green and Gladys Nilsson.



Gladys Nilsson, *Being Beamed*, 1984