

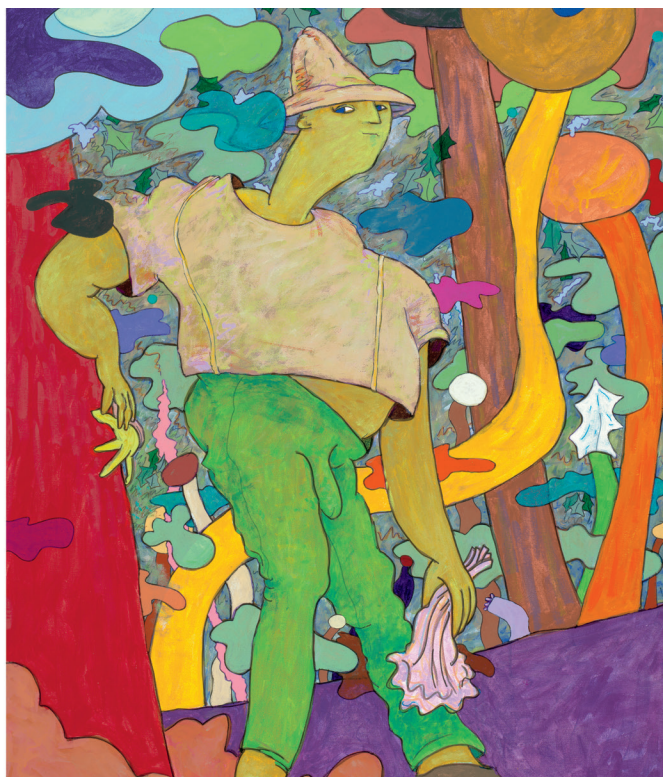
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Contact: Garth Greenan
(212) 929-1351
garth@garthgreenan.com
www.garthgreenan.com

Gladys Nilsson: Honk! Fifty Years of Painting



A Red Tree, 2019



Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to announce *Gladys Nilsson: Honk! Fifty Years of Painting*, an exhibition of paintings and works on paper at **545 West 20th Street**. Opening on Thursday, January 30, 2020, the exhibition will feature a selection of the artist's large-scale, densely layered, and intricately detailed paintings from 2017 to 2019. Nilsson's recent works are her first on canvas since the early 1990s, and her largest since the 1970s. The exhibition is organized in collaboration with Matthew Marks Gallery, where a selection of paintings and drawings made between 1963 and 1980 are on view concurrently. Together the two exhibitions comprise the largest representation of the artist's work to date.

Gladys Nilsson: Honk! Fifty Years of Painting is accompanied by a catalogue co-published with Matthew Marks Gallery, featuring an interview by Alison Gingeras and over one hundred full-color plates. It is the most comprehensive monograph ever published on the artist.

Like the meticulously constructed watercolors and collages for which she is best known, Nilsson's recent paintings are filled to the brim with winding, playful imagery and make full use of their monumental scale. In *Boating*

(2018), a skirted woman with aquamarine skin perches above her male companion, with one of her feet balanced on his shoulder and the other on the side of their canoe. Despite the woman's acrobatic impulse, she's heavy and unbalanced. Her arms, head, neck, and breasts flail autonomously. Her facial expression adds to the bizarre sexual narrative: A faint smile signals her willing participation, but her squinting eyes humorously hint at a kind of mental vacancy. Distracted by his voyeuristic opportunity, her male companion is unconcerned with the precarious tilt of the boat, which threatens to send them overboard at any moment. In line with her characteristic use of hierarchical scale and horror vacui, the artist fills the composition with lilliputians, their bodies as unruly as our female protagonist's.

Nilsson first came to prominence in 1966, when she joined five other recent School of the Art Institute of Chicago graduates (James Falconer, Art Green, Jim Nutt, Suellen Rocca, and Karl Wirsum) for the first of a series of group exhibitions called the *Hairy Who*. The artists' styles were assertively idiosyncratic, but most had trained with professors Kathleen Blackshear and Paul Wiegardt and adapted some of their respective Surrealist and German Expressionist tendencies. Nilsson skillfully integrates elements of both in her playful investigations into human sexuality and its inherent contradictions. In many ways, Nilsson's recent works mark a return to the ambition and scale of those early works that helped establish the *Hairy Who*. She was the first member of the group—and one of the first women in history—to have a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1973.

In 1990, Nilsson accepted a teaching position at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she is now a professor.

Since 1966, Nilsson's work has been the subject of more than fifty solo exhibitions, including sixteen at Phyllis Kind Gallery (1970–1979, 1981–1983, 1987, 1991, and 1994, Chicago and New York), two at The Candy Store (1971 and 1987, Folsom, California), and one at Hales Gallery (2019, London). Her work has also been featured in many important museum exhibitions, such as *Human Concern/Personal Torment* (1969, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York); *Who Chicago?* (1981, Camden Art Center, London); *Parallel Visions: Modern Artists and Outsider Art* (1992, Los Angeles County Museum of Art); *Chicago Imagists* (2011, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Wisconsin); and *What Nerve! Alternative Figures in American Art, 1960 to the Present* (2014, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence). Most recently, Nilsson's work appeared in *The Candy Store* (2018, Parker Gallery, Los Angeles), *Hairy Who? 1966–1969* (2018–2019, School of the Art Institute of Chicago), *Chicago Imagists from the Phyllis Kind Collection* (2019, Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago), and *How Chicago! Imagists 1960s–1970s* (2019, Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art, University of London).

Nilsson's work is featured in the collections of major museums around the world, including the Art Institute of Chicago; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Wisconsin; the Milwaukee Art Museum; the Morgan Library, New York; the Museum Moderner Kunst, Vienna; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; and the Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut.

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to represent Gladys Nilsson.

Gladys Nilsson: Honk! Fifty Years of Painting will be on view at **Garth Greenan Gallery, 545 West 20th Street** (between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues), through **Saturday, March 14, 2020**. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. For more information, **please contact Garth Greenan at (212) 929-1351, or email info@garthgreenan.com**.

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