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Frieze New York



James Luna, *Petroglyphs in Motion*, 2002

For the 2020 edition of Frieze Viewing Room, Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of twelve signature works by four gallery artists—Esteban Cabeza de Baca, Paul Feeley, James Luna, and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Additionally, the gallery will be presenting a selection of new paintings by Gladys Nilsson as part of an exhibition spotlighting Chicago. While each artist in this presentation differs in approach, each utilizes striking aesthetic, formal, or cultural juxtapositions in their work. It will be the first time the gallery has exhibited Cabeza de Baca and Luna’s work at an art fair.

The presentation will include two of James Luna’s iconic conceptual self portraits, *Petroglyphs in Motion* (both 2002). The work highlights Luna’s mastery at subverting and complicating cultural expectations surrounding Native American identity. In one chromographic print, the artist poses as the coyote-Trickster figure: a disruptive and creative archetype in many Native American myths and stories. His portrayal is definitively slapstick: His arms are raised into claws like a child imitating a dinosaur, and a furry tail hangs out of his high-cut shorts. The comedic register of the piece violates cultural expectations of spiritual seriousness and authenticity surrounding Native artists, even as it perfectly embodies the spirit of the archetype it represents. As if to emphasize the double bluff of inauthenticity, Luna wears a generic red T-shirt torn at the shoulders to resemble traditional dress.

Like Luna, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith crafted poetic, curious, and profound interpretations of America’s particular forms of bigotry toward Native peoples, often utilizing humor in striking and unsettling ways. Smith’s *I See Red: Petroglyph Park* (1996) juxtaposes pictographs with cartoons, found images, and newspaper clippings. Beginning in the mid-80s, Albuquerque city officials and property developers fought to extend the six lane highway Paseo Del Norte through the Petroglyph National Monument, a sacred Pueblo site. The pictographic figure in the center of Smith’s composition—possibly lifted from one of the monument’s petroglyphs—has its arms raised, as if in surrender. But Native Americans, environmentalists,

and other protesters fought tirelessly to protect the site. Taxonomic drawings of flowers and fish show through the layers of paint, placing the battle for the park within a larger context of the Western conquest of nature. A cartoon car traverses the canvas, a news clipping reads “Making \$ense of it all,” and a prophetic headline reads, “An ‘Inevitable’ Conclusion.” Though activists’ efforts delayed the project for nearly two decades, the highway was eventually extended in the early 2000s. Smith’s upcoming retrospective at the Whitney Museum of American Art is currently slated for July – October, 2022.

Three of Esteban Cabeza de Baca’s paintings from 2018 and 2019 will also be included in the presentation. The artist employs a broad range of painterly techniques, entwining layers of graffiti, landscape, and ancient symbols. His work often draws on his complex ancestry as a person of Native American and Mexican descent with a direct link to the Spanish conquistador-turned-spiritual-healer Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca. In *From Dusk* (2019), the artist foregrounds a luminescent white buffalo in the center of a crepuscular orange desertscape, the ochre palate teetering between Fauvism and cave painting. A human head floats in the sky, drawing a parallel to the proto-surrealism of the many Ascension of Christ paintings in the European tradition. If the glowing white buffalo is the divine stand-in, Cabeza de Baca renders a pack of carnivorous wolves in frenetic, de Kooning-style abstraction as substitutes for the devotees. The artist’s hybrid techniques and influences form a complex braid, interrogating the dialectical relationships between colonialism and its critique.

Finally, the presentation will include a selection of four works on paper by Paul Feeley, all made in 1963. For Feeley, paper was a medium where he explored and developed the iconic sinusoidal and geometrical forms that would define his mature work and remained an integral part of his practice through his career. Like many of his mature works, *Pijai II (January 23)* (1963) is governed by mathematical curvature and symmetry, resulting in a jack-like or atomic form. The hand-painted yellow, blue, and red fields trace each other, organically and sensuously deviating from mechanical perfection. At the heart of much of Feeley’s work was an interplay between the Apollonian and Dionysian.

The separate Chicago exhibition features a selection of Gladys Nilsson’s large-scale, densely layered, and intricately detailed paintings from 2016–2020. The artist’s recent works are her first on canvas since the early 1990s, and her largest since the 1970s. True to her iconic style, each painting is crowded by Nilsson’s humorously pitiable female characters, acrobatically but unsuccessfully negotiating with their bodies’ unruly lumps, bulges, and limbs. These paintings mark a return to the ambition and scale of her early works that helped establish the Hairy Who.

Nilsson is known for her densely layered, meticulously constructed watercolors, paintings, and collages. Like many of the Hairy Who artists, Nilsson employs a type of horror vacui; many of her works are filled to the brim with winding, playful imagery, invoking aspects of human sexuality and its inherent contradictions. Born in Chicago in 1940, Gladys Nilsson first came to prominence in 1966 when she joined five other recent School of the Art Institute of Chicago graduates (Jim Falconer, Art Green, Jim Nutt, Suellen Rocca, and Karl Wirsum) for the first of a series of group exhibitions called the Hairy Who. In 1973, she became one of the first women to have a solo-exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

The exhibition will be available via Frieze Viewing Room: a mobile app and web-based platform that gives new and established collectors, museum professionals, and the public the ability to digitally explore and acquire art from world-leading galleries.

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to represent Gladys Nilsson, Esteban Cabeza de Baca and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, as well as the estates of Paul Feeley and James Luna.

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