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MARCH 2024 GALLERY EXHIBITION OPENINGS

5-25 46th Ave, Queens, NY 11101

www.Culturelablic.org

Culture Lab LIC announces March 2024 Gallery Exhibition Opening

Behind the Mask: The Art of Women Welders

curated by Karen Kettering-Dimit & Janet Rutkowski

On view March 7, 2024 - April 28, 2024

Opening Reception March 7, 2024, 6-8PM

As we celebrate Women's History Month in March, let us go back to where women welding began. It actually started in 1917 during World War I. Women were needed to fill jobs in the workforce. That's when The Society of Women Welders was formed. Presently, it is a misconception that there are few women welders in the arts. Artists such as Louise Bourgeois, Barbara Hepworth, Beverly Pepper, Deborah Butterfield and Lin Emery have accomplished great strides in metal sculpture. These women were the inspiration for the concept of this exhibition. We are proud to present over 50 artworks by 29 women artists who include welding as a part of their creative practice. Some are mid-career sculptors and teach welding along with newly schooled welders all who are creating powerful works of art.

Our cover image, Oracle by Alexandra Limpert, is the perfect blend of technical skills, industrial feel and abstract design. The Oracle sculpture operates with an exposed manual mechanism behind a metal mask.

Sheila Berger's Deconstructed Birds display an ethereal balancing act making steel as light as air.

Fara'h Salehi is the founder Salehi / Kushi, a WOC owned and led architectural metal fabrication and furniture design company. She will be showcasing a series of her new sculptures which not only highlight her mastery of the medium but also the strength of abstract forms that can be playfully stacked or flipped.

Pema Kongpo is a multi-disciplinary Tibetan-American artist and a recent student of welding. She graces the exhibition with Tulips where the beauty exists in the simplicity of form.

Marguerite Elliot, a California based sculptor is a woman whose monumental "Sentinel" works have been shown worldwide. She has submitted Sacred Scars which was inspired after traveling through Turkey and North India. She began experimenting with steel mesh as screens. She was fascinated with the way screens were used to shield women from the male gaze while also confining them.

Natsuki Takauji is not only an extraordinary sculptor but one who is passing on the legacy as a welding teacher at the Art Students League here in NYC. Her Lifelines wall pieces are a captivating combination of blown glass and steel. They are graceful and organic.

Other Artists in this exhibition include...Caroline Bergonzi, Katee Boyle, Imogene Brent, Pam Brown, Regina Corritore, Bruna D'Alexandro, Karen Kettering Dimit, Iulia Filipov-Serediuc, Christine Galvez, Janet Goldner, Gaelle Hintzy Marcel, Michelle Jaffe, Wendy Kaplan Friend, Patricia Talbot, Marsha Pels, Marsha Powell, Nancy Quin, Janet Rutkowski, Corrina Sephora, Chiva Soriano, Anne Stanner, Maria Volkova and Rebecca Welz.

Co-curators Janet Rutkowski and Karen Kettering Dimit envisioned this exhibition at Culture Lab in L.I.C. NY. Their proposal was accepted and began the work of finding women welders in January 2024.

Janet Rutkowski is a Brooklyn based sculptor and curator. Karen Kettering Dimit is a New York based sculptor and curator.

Wappen Field is a solo show, adjacent to the exhibition "Behind the Mask: Art of Women Welders."

Wappen Field (2003-2015) is a sculpture and sound installation comprised of 12 chrome plated steel helmets resembling face guards. Each helmet is a resonant chamber, where their dedicated speakers transform the sculptural installation into an immersive audio environment. Vocal recordings created for *Wappen Field* by Ayelet Rose Gottlieb, culled from seven diverse performers, are composed by Michelle Jaffe & spatialized algorithmically by David Reeder in SuperCollider.

Wappen Field asks us to consider what we, as human beings, share in common with one another, as well as what divides us. Experiencing the work we may be reminded that while civilization evolves and technology races ahead, the basic tenets of human existence are the same. Humanity appears to be tethered to its limbic brain, pulling us again into conflict. The installation is an occasion to imagine the unconscious as energy driven by collective subliminal desires. These proclivities of history between repression and enlightened engagement.