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WOMEN

“Women” is a group show that continues Nicole Klagsbrun’s working engagement with several artists and her decades-long commitment to presenting work made by women. Over the years, Klagsbrun has presented group and solo exhibitions with many of the artists in “Women,” adding several key chapters to her gallery’s robust history.

Indeed, “Women” subtly echoes some of Klagsbrun’s early and important gallery exhibitions from the late 1980s and 1990s. In 1989, after serving as the director of Olsen Gallery and as a cofounder of Cable Gallery, Klagsbrun opened Nicole Klagsbrun Gallery at 51 Greene Street in SoHo. That year she presented Karen Kilimnick’s influential *The Hellfire Club Episode of the Avengers*, 1989, a sprawling installation related to a drawing by Kilimnick in this show. Riffing off the 1960s British television series *The Avengers*, Kilimnick’s *The Hellfire Club Episode of the Avengers* is composed of an arrangement of xeroxes, photographs, and props framed by velvet curtains and two drawings of British manor houses. Here, Kilimnick’s *Int. Steed’s Apartment*, 1998, appears as a metaphoric love letter to Harry Pottle, *The Avengers*’s art director.

In 1992, Klagsbrun organized the first New York solo gallery show for Candida Höfer. A color photograph in this show by Höfer, *Kurmittelhaus Wenningstedt 1*, 1979, depicts an empty public health spa flooded with light and chaise lounges. Maureen Gallace’s second solo New York outing in 1993, and Jay DeFeo’s debut in the city that same year, marked two more of Klagsbrun’s significant shows of the early 1990s. In this exhibition, two of Gallace’s paintings from 1999 epitomize the style she would pursue to great success. Additionally, DeFeo’s painting on paper *Summer Landscape*, 1982, foregrounds the dynamic abstraction that made her a pivotal figure in San Francisco’s thriving art scene. Judith Barry and Mary Beth Edelson had solo shows with Klagsbrun in 1991 and 1993, respectively. Here, Barry is represented by a new mixed-media piece, *Preliminary Sketch for “Displacement,”* 2017/2023, which foregrounds the global migration crisis, while an iconic Edelson drawing from her 1973 feminist series “Woman Rising” is on view.

“Women” also features another assembly of women in situ: the small, flat dolls in Sana Musasama’s ceramic mixed-media *I See Me* series, 2021–22, which expresses self-respect and self-love. With movable legs and hair wrapped in glass beads, in these works Musasama references a valuable childhood lesson from her mother, who made a doll that looked like her, as she wanted to show her daughter the beauty of having black kinky hair. Of these sculptures, Musasama has stated, “after the pandemic and the shape in which we find the society/world, I wanted my next work to not only speak to the indomitable human spirit but joy and love. I want to honor the women that influenced me and the young girls I have mentored all my life.”¹ In turn, “Women” is an homage to the many women Klagsbrun has worked with, too.

Full list of artists: Ryoko Aoki, Judith Barry, Heidi Bucher, Cameron, Sarah Charlesworth, N. Dash, Jay DeFeo, Mary Beth Edelson, Katharina Fritsch, Maureen Gallace, Candida Höfer, Sheree Hovsepian, Karen Kilimnick, Turiya Magadlela, Ana Mendieta, Sana Musasama, Elaine Reichel, Mika Rottenberg, Brie Ruais, and Xaviera Simmons.

¹ TS Murphy, *The Artist at Play: New Works by Sana Musasama*, Tiger Strikes Asteroid New York, <https://www.tigerstrikesasteroid.com/tagged/ineverplayedwithdolls>.