

Tuesday — Saturday 12 — 6 PM

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*Press Release*

## Artemisia

8 September 2017 — 28 October 2017

*For the opening of the new gallery season Albert Baronian is pleased to present "ARTEMISIA", a group exhibition bringing together works by Marina Adams, Ilse D'Hollander, Amy Feldman, Fiona Mackay and Leen Voet.*

*Artemisia Gentileschi* which gave its name at the exhibition, was an Italian Baroque painter, today considered one of the most accomplished painters in the generation following that of Caravaggio. In an era when women painters were not easily accepted by the artistic community or patrons, she was the first woman to become a member of the Accademia di Arte del Disegno in Florence.\*

The exhibition aims to highlight five female painters which have been subjectively chosen, only driven by a matter of taste and without any ambition of creating links between their respective works. Each painting is given to the spectator as a unique experience. The paintings exist by themselves and for themselves. Each selected artist has its own style and visual identity. They give us their own perception of what can be femininity through paintings without specifically thinking about it or having it in mind. Some of them brings this form of femininity in the foreground by the form and the colors, and others reveal it more modestly through the eyes of the watcher. We can't forget that as we can say in French "La peinture est un mot féminin". Painting itself is engaged by a female form.

**Marina Adams** (b.1960 in Orange, NJ , USA) is a painter based in both New York City and Parma, Italy.

Fluently pushing color into form, Adams creates undulating, interlocking shapes that reveal a powerful internal rhythm beneath their surface simplicity. Adams' vibrant compositions use saturated shades and sensual shapes to pack a graphic punch. While purely abstract, the works' organic, free-flowing patterns are redolent of landscapes or bodies. In order to find the flow of each canvas, Adams first draws the

composition in charcoal. When she begins to paint, she says, the painting's fluid rhythm asserts itself, sometimes, it seems, wanting to continue right off the edge of the canvas.

« I think of it more like music in that respect, that there's a flow and a continuum. »

The patterns evoke references to Moroccan textiles or Moorish tile, but their soft edges and tonal shifts create a uniquely sensual experience.

Unlike many contemporary artists, who deliberately blur the line between figurative and abstract, Adams' current work is unabashedly—and exuberantly—abstract, allowing the artist to revel in the “soft power” of playing with sheer color, form and pattern. It's no surprise that Adams, a 2016 Guggenheim Fellowship recipient, counts among her influences late Willem de Kooning and Joan Mitchell.

As the artist puts it, “Meaning and intellect in abstract art can be difficult to locate, as there is no narrative to lead us into it. It is like the voice itself.

## **Ilse d'Hollander** (1968 – 1997, Belgium)

Created during a very brief period, from 1989 until her early, unexpected and tragic death at the age of 29, Ilse D'Hollander's oeuvre exhibits a highly developed sense of color, composition, scale and surface, through the use of subtle tones and pared down compositions. An artist's artist, her canvases and works on paper favor abstraction, yet subtly allude to the everyday, hinting at nature and the landscape of the Flemish countryside where she spent the last and most productive years of her life.

D'Hollander's subtly evocative canvases have drawn comparisons to work as various as that of early Piet Mondrian, Nicolas de Staël and Raoul De Keyser – whom she regarded as a friend – her work is distinguished by its contemplative tranquility, ethereal quality and brilliant, deceptive simplicity. The intimate scale of her canvases invites the viewer to embrace a highly personal relationship with the work, where multiple layers of paint, visible brushstrokes and trembling lines of color reveal D'Hollander's tangible and sensual exploration of the act of painting. In the only text she penned about her work, D'Hollander wrote that, “A painting comes into being when ideas and the act of painting coincide. When referring to ideas, it implies that as a painter, I am not facing my canvas as a neutral being but as an acting being who is investing into the act of painting. My being is present in my action on the canvas.”

## **Amy Feldman** (b.1981) lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

Feldman's paintings are the product of a fundamental duality between preparation and execution as she translates her initial drawings into exuberant forms. Amy Feldman composes striking images by employing a concise vocabulary of pictorial elements on the surface of her paintings. What appears as casual is carefully

intentioned, yet the application of the paint itself is the work of an instant, creating paintings that are tenaciously rooted in the present moment. Each canvas is like a live performance, presenting a lasting index of Feldman's movements and looping in perpetuity wherever the work is on view. For Feldman, the strength of her work lies in its immediacy and the vitality of her forms. The seductive forms that inhabit her paintings are consciously anthropomorphic and deadpan. Referencing the artists' personal history and corporeality, these shapes become signifiers of widespread anxiety. This is exemplified in the charged tensions between figure and ground, image and edge. These canvases envelop the viewer in the fantastic schematics of Feldman's imagination, commanding introspection and meditating on paintings' potential to distill human experience. Her work is a testament to the continued possibilities of the painterly gesture, yet her titles are a gentle reproach to the high-minded seriousness of midcentury abstraction.

**Fiona Mackay** (b. 1984 Aberdeen, Scotland) lives and works in Brussels, Belgium

"Fiona Mackay's recent series of paintings is made with traditional batik dye and wax on very thin canvas. The restrictions of this technique (the effects of the appliance of pigments to a large extent unpredictable) challenge the artist to balance between control and letting go. On the one hand the works connect to the heydays of abstract painting (a predominantly male territory), while on the other they are clearly reminiscent of the world of textiles and folk art, usually associated with the feminine. The results, intense and luminescent, reveal an uncommon marriage of solidity and fluidity, monumentality and domesticity, the earnest and the whimsical, achieving a maximum impact with limited means."

**Leen Voet** (b. 1971, Belgium) lives and works in Brussels, Belgium

In her recent works Leen Voet suspends the question of what to paint repeatedly in favor of 'found' visual and literary sources or 'given' imagery (literal pictures, or re-imagined illustrations with reference to texts) she converts into her own paintings, drawings and other media, these works evidently being in their own right. In her most recent series of new paintings and drawings „Bert Vandael“, she seeks direct dialogue to works she performed during her early education at art school. Numerous works done in watercolour or in tempera were then academic studies after nature (or, more likely after photographs) and part of the educational routine examined and approbated by Leen Voet's former teacher who lends his name at the work's title. Stripped bare from the original context, the sheer amount of pictures makes clear that what to paint was hardly the question when the manual training, evoking the complex of discipline and 'skills' as traditionally connected with an academic art education, was the essence of and reason behind what we receive as pictures.