



KENISE BARNES FINE ART

Press Release

Exhibition: *Happiest with Blossoms Above My Head and Flowers Around My Feet*

Dates: Saturday May 18 – June 30, 2024

Reception: Saturday May 18, 4 – 6 PM, public invited

Gallery hours: Thursday – Saturday 11:00 – 5:30, Sunday 12:00 – 4:00

Happiest with Blossoms Above My Head and Flowers Around My Feet
Jackie Battenfield and Margot Glass

Kenise Barnes Fine Art is pleased to announce an exhibition featuring two contemporary artists whose work is focused on botany.

Battenfield's meditative painting process begins with the artist's close attention to the graceful forms of unfolding leaves and blossoms, and to the twisted boughs and branches of trees. This series was inspired by time the artist spent at a rural meditation retreat where spring was slowly awakening the landscape from its winter bareness. Sitting by a window, in meditative silence, the artist was transfixed as tender buds and leaves daily transformed a gnarly elm tree. Battenfield's paintings evoke the immediacy and beauty of that experience.

The images of branches, leaves and blooms are first recorded as photographs, then meticulously drawn onto large sheets of translucent Mylar. Paying close attention to the true form of each natural element, the artist builds her graceful compositions. Battenfield's paintings draw upon two natural but disparate processes: the gestural unfolding and leafing of a branching tree limb and the physical properties and behaviors of pigments. Battenfield mixes her pigments to an ink-like consistency and generously brushes the acrylic paint onto the smooth Mylar where it forms a puddle of paint. As the paint mixture dries, the pigments reassert themselves, separating and forming unexpected and distinct abstract patterns. An expert colorist, Battenfield creates hundreds of color studies to investigate and consider the different levels of color saturation and the separation affected by the various pigments' origin and weight. To accentuate the contrast between image and ground, Battenfield leaves the background of her paintings untreated, allowing her botanical forms to float against the pristine white Mylar. Each painting is then mounted on a clear acrylic panel that allows light to play behind the translucent painted surface.

Jackie Battenfield was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She earned an MFA in Visual Art from Syracuse University and a BS from Pennsylvania State University. She is the recipient of a Pollock-Krasner Award (1991) and the Warren Tanner Award (1996). Her work is widely exhibited throughout the United States and is in more than 1000 collections worldwide including the New York Public Library, NY; The Zimmerli Art Museum, Montclair Art Museum, NJ; Palmer Museum, University Park, PA; Museum of Art at the University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ; and the United States Embassy

7 Fulling Lane, Kent, CT 06757 860 592 0220

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Collections, Brazil, Cambodia, Croatia, Jamaica, and Peru. She recently completed public art commissions for New York University, Langone Medical Center, Radiation Treatment Suite and The Metropolitan Transportation Authority Arts & Design, Avenue P elevated subway station, F line, Brooklyn, NY. Jackie Battenfield lives in and works in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn, NY.

For Margot Glass the idealization of nature in ornament across cultures is fascinating. Her work explores the tension between natural and synthetic symmetry and pattern in nature and design. How we see and alter nature to suit our aesthetic desires is what draws her to decorative arts traditions for inspiration as much as the fine art traditions of painting and drawing. A central theme in Glass's work is the exploration of ephemerality, focusing primarily on weeds and other plants generally considered to be undesirable. She draws these specimens to highlight their imperfect beauty and asymmetry. Margot Glass's subjects are found sprouting through cracks in the sidewalks, and in the margins of public spaces and forest borders.

Because of her professional training in metal point drawing and gilding techniques, and because she is inspired by the tesserae of Byzantine mosaics, traditional decorative metalwork and architectural adornments, gold is a natural choice of drawing medium for the artist. Gold has light shifting properties that effect the fine lines and dense details of Glass's drawing inviting slow, and close viewing. Margot Glass also uses traditional methods and formulas for making organic ink from black walnuts which are collected and dried and brewed. This labor-intensive process is another way to slow time that is integral to her process. In Glass's drawings of grasses and clover, her interest is in the transcendent power of natural forms to shift from taxonomic specificity to a more meditative visual experience found in repetition of negative space, shape, and line.

Margot Glass's work is shown widely in the US and is in the collections of Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation at Carnegie Mellon, PA, Midwest Museum of American Art, Del Coronado Hotel, San Diego, CA, Weatherspoon Art Museum, NC, Allentown Art Museum, PA, Beth Rudin DeWoody, Robert Kushner and other international private collections. Her work has been featured in Wall Street Journal International, art Daily, Artsy, Orion Magazine, American Art Collector and Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, to name a few. Glass earned a degree from Smith College, Historic Artist Materials and Techniques, and B.A. Honors, Brown University | Brown-RISD Reciprocal Program, Providence, RI. Margot Glass lives and works in MA.

Please contact Lani Holloway, Associate Director, Lani@kbfa.com, 860 560 3085 with inquires or to arrange a preview of the exhibition.