

Capitain Petzel

BARBARA BLOOM

Works on Paper, on Paper

March 7 - April 18, 2020

Opening: Saturday, March 7, 6 - 8.30 pm

Works on Paper, on Paper marks Barbara Bloom's second exhibition at Capitain Petzel. Composed of two parts, it features the series *Stand-Ins* in the main gallery space and *Objects of Desire* on the backside of the partition wall.

Bloom's *Stand-Ins* constitute an ongoing series from the 1980s. For *Works on Paper, on Paper* she presents two of her historical *Stand-Ins* – *Marriage on the Rocks*, 1986 and *Homage to Jean Seberg*, 1981 – alongside four new works. Each *Stand-In* consists of an unfurled roll of seamless backdrop paper on which is placed a piece of furniture, accompanied by object-props: books, open magazines, newspapers, pieces of clothing, and occasionally a framed image. The works hover somewhere between sculpture, *mise en scène*, and the clues left for a detective's perusal.

A photographer rolls down a swath of seamless backdrop paper in order to frame what is placed in front of it, so as to photograph the model and props in seamless, isolated color. The point of this color-field framing is to divorce the objects from the real world, rendering them contextless, spaceless. In Bloom's works, the backdrop papers function similarly as a framing device, but there is no photographer and no photographs taken. The viewer observes only the set-up, a scene that implies an event just happened or will soon take place. Though the objects physically stand before the viewer, they do not exist in the present tense; placed in the seamless color-field they become atemporal, timeless.

Bloom has spent years making works that explore what it means to pay tribute or honor a person or place, and she has given much thought to conjuring up the presence of an absent person or lapsed event. She has pondered extensively the many forms of memorial, tribute, commemoration, and homage. With her *Stand-Ins*, she approaches the subject of portraiture, but these works are not portraits. Instead, the stand-in furniture and props act as metonymic devices: the thing used or regarded as a substitute for someone.

On the backside of the partition wall, Bloom presents her new series titled *Objects of Desire*. For this she takes as starting point the idea of the coveted object and contemplates what grants it the allure and capacity to act as a carrier of meaning. What if we were to consider these objects not for their aesthetic, symbolic or metaphoric qualities, but as intermediaries (messengers) between people? Perhaps we should consider them, as described by the anthropologist Alfred Gell, as ambassadors. Here, Bloom presents a number of items that have over the years, as she says, "gotten their hold on me". These are not the originals and thus do not possess the aura of the item once touched by the hand of the famous person. They are facsimiles of particular objects that have called out to Bloom throughout her life. Each facsimile is housed and displayed in a custom-built case that infers the original owner's habits, actions, and interaction with it.

Bloom was born in Los Angeles, California in 1951 and graduated from the California Institute of the Arts in 1972. In 2020, she will have a solo show at the Kunsthall Aarhus, Denmark and in 2022 a large-scale commission from The Shed, New York. Her work can be found in public collections worldwide including the Dutch National Collection, The Hague; International Center of Photography, New York; MAK Museum of Applied Arts, Vienna; Musée Cantini, Marseille; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago; The New School, New York and Yokohama Museum of Art, Yokohama.