

GAGOSIAN

Gagosian to Present *Mirror*, an Exhibition of New Works by Rachel Feinstein in London



Rachel Feinstein, *Nicodemus and Jesus*, 2021, oil, acrylic urethane, and charcoal on mirror, 34 × 28 inches (86.4 × 71.1 cm)
© Rachel Feinstein

I was not concerned with gender, desire, high and low culture, theater, or taste in these works. For me it is about life and death.

—Rachel Feinstein

LONDON, January 14, 2022—Gagosian is pleased to present *Mirror*, an exhibition of new works by Rachel Feinstein. This is her first exhibition with the gallery in the United Kingdom, and her first in London since 2007.

Comprising paintings on mirror and a large stained-wood sculpture titled *Metal Storm* (2021), the exhibition is animated by Feinstein's fascination with the human figure and historical and cultural narratives. The works in *Mirror* refer to German art from the turn of the sixteenth century, a period of transition from the Gothic to the Northern Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. Shifting between two- and three-dimensional modes of representation, this new work uses historical and religious symbolism to embody worldwide anxieties of the unknown during the time of COVID.

Articulated in oil on mirrored glass, Feinstein's paintings in *Mirror* reference sixteenth-century sculptural altarpieces carved in unpainted limewood by Tilman Riemenschneider and a polychrome figure by Gregor Erhart, another German sculptor of the era. Technically virtuosic, these artists united Gothic elegance with humanistic expression to represent religious figures including Christ, the apostles, saints, and Mary Magdalene as symbols of compassion, suffering, and love.

Beginning with charcoal drawings of figures selected from details of these historical sculptures, Feinstein next developed pastel drawings at full scale on wooden panels, and then painted the images on mirrors. Using brown and grisaille tones to interpret the intricately carved textures of the original works, she represents these figures both individually and in groups. Their eyes are left unpainted, evoking the uncanny sense of becoming one with the painting when the viewer looks into them. The duality of void and reflection in the mirror paintings thereby allows a space for empathy, identification, and comfort. Reanimated by Feinstein, these hybrid bodies convey the complexities of representation and the continued relevance of the past.

Metal Storm is composed of interlocking wooden planes that represent three female witches engaged in a ritual, holding aloft a fiery container that echoes the flamelike tendrils of the figures' hair. Voluptuous and in contorted poses, these witches were inspired by a 1514 drawing by Hans Baldung Grien, a protégé of Albrecht Dürer and among the first artists in Europe to feature images of witches in his paintings and prints. Baldung worked in an era when women accused of witchcraft were persecuted in mass numbers, but in his portrayals these figures are mysterious, grotesque, erotic, and intriguing. For Feinstein, the witch represents a power and creativity that existed outside the strictures of patriarchal society—an archetype of femininity that was both feared and revered, and one regarded as a more dynamic creative force than the archetypal figure of the mother.

Rachel Feinstein was born in Fort Defiance, Arizona, and lives and works in New York. Collections include the Jewish Museum, New York; Lever House Art Collection, New York; Museum of Modern Art, New York; RISD Museum, Providence, RI; Hall Art Foundation, Reading, VT; Rubell Museum, Miami; and Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Solo exhibitions include *Tropical Rodeo*, Le Consortium, Dijon, France (2005–06); *The Snow Queen*, Lever House, New York (2011); *Folly*, Madison Square Park, New York (2014); and a survey exhibition, *Maiden, Mother, Crone*, Jewish Museum, New York (2019–21). Group exhibitions include *The Americans: New Art*, Barbican Art Gallery, London (2001); *Candyland Zoo*, Herbert Read Gallery, Kent Institute of Art and Design, Canterbury, England (2004); *Something about Mary*, Metropolitan Opera, New York (2009–10); *Little Black Dress*, SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA (2012–13); *L'Almanach 14*, Le Consortium, Dijon, France (2014); and *No Longer/Not Yet*, Minsheng Art Museum, Shanghai (2015).

#RachelFeinstein

RACHEL FEINSTEIN

Mirror

January 27–March 5, 2022

17–19 Davies Street, London

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