

PAULA COOPER GALLERY

CONTEMPORARY ANTIQUITY

Beatrice Caracciolo, Sarah Charlesworth, Liz Glynn,
Justin Matherly, Walid Raad, Dan Walsh, Meg Webster

243A Worth Ave, Palm Beach
October 15 – November 12, 2022

Paula Cooper Gallery is delighted to open the fall season in Palm Beach with a selection of works by gallery artists that engage with the influence of antiquity. The works in this exhibition reference and revive specific objects, materials, and systems that originated in ancient times, underlining and reiterating how the knowledge and traditions of the past are embedded in contemporary culture.

In the first gallery, **Walid Raad's** *Epilogue: The Gold and Silver* series presents examples of decorative metalwork from the collection of the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid. For reasons unknown, each object has attracted a specific insect, as if possessing a mysterious force of attraction. As Raad explains, "among the mass of displayed objects in any museum, some artworks occasionally call out, seeking an 'ear' among the hundreds of passers-by."¹ Complementing the gold and silver inlay in Raad's decorative objects is **Meg Webster's** *Copper Disk for Facing Hands*, a tabletop sculpture of pure copper that retains and omits heat when left in the sun, like a talisman for communing with the natural world.

In the second gallery, *Uomini Rosa* by **Beatrice Caracciolo** transports the viewer to the 18th century through a meditation on the drawings of Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo. With forceful lines and spontaneous markings, Caracciolo expands on Tiepolo's *Divertimento per li ragazzi* series, which illustrates the life and times of commedia dell'arte character Punchinello. Similarly expressive are **Liz Glynn's** discretely handcrafted clay sculptures modelled after the masks featured in ancient Greek theatre. Glynn's masks, titled *Pathos*, echo the historical tradition of using exaggerated features to transform a performer's emotional state and internal psychology.

Justin Matherly also looks to ancient Greece in his sculptures portraying Asclepius, the ancient god of medicine, and his son Telesphoros, the symbol of recovery. Cast in modified gypsum plaster, a contemporary material associated with orthopedic dressing, the figures offer a modern reinterpretation of their ancient antecedents that were made of fine grain gypsum or marble. Archaic features, roughly scored surfaces, fissured seams and smeared paint contrast with the idealized forms of classical antiquity.

Photographs from **Sarah Charlesworth's** celebrated *Objects of Desire* series propose an alternative iconography of visual culture by presenting excised images against fields of pure color. Here, Charlesworth borrows from various antique precedents, including Indigenous pre-Columbian objects, Renaissance painting, and medieval European sculpture. Finally, paintings and wood panels by **Dan Walsh** use a complex system of patterning to suggest meaning through geometry and abstraction. The large-scale painting *Cycle III* uses pictographs to catalogue wide-ranging cultural and historical sources, reconfigured into a new visual language through Walsh's playful yet rigorous vocabulary. Surprising and heterogeneous, yet unified by the organizing structure of the grid, the painting evokes not only the history of painting but also makes connections with graphic design, fabric patterns, architecture, and Eastern spiritual art.

¹ Walid Raad, "Artist Statement," in *Cotton under my feet* exhibition brochure (Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid, Spain, 2021)