

GAGOSIAN

Gagosian to Exhibit New Paintings and Sculptures by Llyn Foulkes

Bombs Away Opens in Beverly Hills on January 21, 2023



Llyn Foulkes, *Implantation*, 2019–21, pigment print, acrylic, and found objects in aluminum frame, with velvet on panel, 79 × 89 inches (200.7 × 226.1 cm) © Llyn Foulkes

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A lot of my stuff is in opposition. My machine. My paintings. I've been fighting against something the whole time.

—Llyn Foulkes

BEVERLY HILLS, January 5, 2023—Gagosian is pleased to announce *Bombs Away*, an exhibition of paintings, sculptures, and mixed-media works produced by Llyn Foulkes between 2018 and 2022.

Highly diverse, tough to categorize, and often wickedly confrontational, Foulkes's body of work includes landscape and portrait paintings, mixed-media constructions, and narrative tableaux. Having progressed from the unsettling imagery of his early 1960s paintings, through the geological and postcard subjects of his late '60s and early '70s work, to the “bloody head” series of figures from later that decade, he also became known for singular combinations of painting with wood, found clothing, and upholstery fabric. Foulkes's mordant social commentary has consistently targeted human cruelty and challenged the excesses of corporate America—particularly the Walt Disney Company.

Whatever their medium and format, Foulkes's works are characterized by their provocative subjects and unexpected formal juxtapositions. In the sculpture *The Broken Chain* (2020), a lion, standing on an antique-style library card catalogue, bites into a bald eagle in flight, while a nude mannequin looks on. *Le Bomb* (2020), another jarring assemblage of found objects, features the titular weapon projecting from a gnarled tree trunk. *Ivanka* (2022) incorporates fragments of animal hide and jawbone into a brutally unflattering portrait of Donald Trump's eldest daughter and former senior adviser, while *Surrender* (2022) tackles the war in Ukraine, picturing a sickle-wielding figure blindfolded by the blue-and-yellow Ukrainian flag.

Three works in the exhibition make cutting reference to Disney, Foulkes's long-time *bête noire*. In *Family Portrait* (2022), the artist has replaced the heads of a couple and baby in a formal photograph with black-and-white visages of an ossified Mickey Mouse. The image is set against a chalkboard covered with half-erased messages about the financial worth of children. The cartoon rodent also crops up in *Implantation* (2019–21) and *Untitled: Baby Mickey* (2020). In the former, he appears in the form of a classic round-eared hat, on the face of a wristwatch, and as the graphic on a "face mask required" sign. The title, inscribed beneath the image, refers to the moment when a fertilized egg attaches to the uterine lining, an allusion to the beginning of life that here allegorizes commercial indoctrination. In the latter work, the familiar silhouette of Mickey's head masks that of a baby in an ornate vintage gown, wholly erasing its identity.

Foulkes's caustic, often deliberately crude sense of humor is on display throughout the exhibition. In *Skin Flute* (2020), he works with a vintage photograph, replacing the subject's head with a cartoonlike drawing of a penis, a musical staff arching over the whole composition. *Creeps* (2021) depicts a MAGA-hatted father and son, their faces represented by female torsos in the manner of Magritte's *Rape* (1945), leering at a third figure who rebuffs them with the titular insult. Combining such visual wit with a freewheeling collage style, informed by artists ranging from John Heartfield and Hannah Höch to Edward Kienholz and George Helms, Foulkes continues to meld coruscating observations on American pop culture and political life with investigations into the nature of the painted, constructed, and photographic image.

Llyn Foulkes was born in Yakima, Washington, in 1934, and lives and works in Los Angeles. Collections include the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Exhibitions include the Pasadena Art Museum (1962); Oakland Art Museum (1964); Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1967); Newport Harbor Art Museum (1974); *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA (1995–96, traveled to Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati; Oakland Museum of California; Neuberger Museum of Art, State University of New York, Purchase, NY; and Palm Springs Desert Museum, 1996–98), and Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2013). Foulkes participated in the IX Bienal de São Paulo (1967) and Documenta 13, Kassel, Germany (2012), and won the Prize for Painting at the Biennale de Paris in 1967. As a musician, he has played drums with City Lights (1965–71) and The Rubber Band (1973–77), and currently performs as one-man band The Machine.

#LlynFoulkes

LLYN FOULKES

Bombs Away

Opening reception: Saturday, January 21, 4–6pm

January 21–February 25, 2023

456 North Camden Drive, Beverly Hills

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