

## BORTOLAMI



### BORTOLAMI Presents Jutta Koether's *Fortune*

NEW YORK, NY – Bortolami is pleased to announce *Fortune*, Jutta Koether's second solo exhibition with the gallery, coinciding with a reprint of the artist's 1987 novella *f*. On view from May 9 through June 6, 2015, this exhibition presents a new series of paintings that both reference and depart from the allegorical figure of Fortune's wheel.<sup>1</sup>

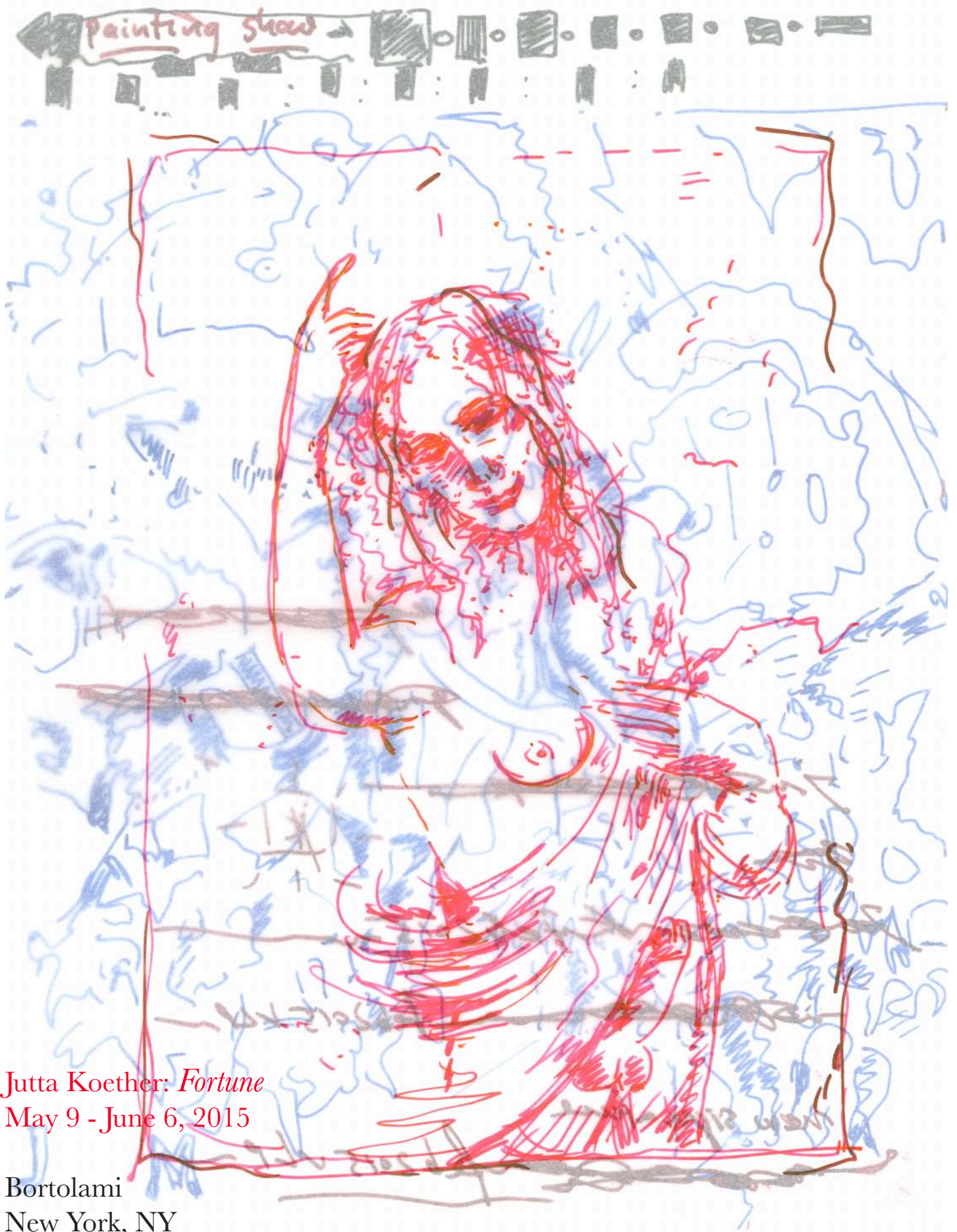
*Fortune* is a continuation of Koether's last two solo exhibitions in 2014; *Champrovent* at Reena Spaulings Fine Art in New York and *Maquis* at Galerie Francesca Pia in Zurich, Switzerland. Koether conceived of the installations in direct conversation with each gallery's environs. Each series traces a circuitous path, casting a sidelong glance toward the unrealized goals and desires of past creators. The paintings do not occupy the space; they live through it. The paintings might be participants, responding to their surroundings as any viewer.

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<sup>1</sup>The metaphor of the wheel of Fortune began with the Greeks, starting with Pindar's Olympian odes in the fifth century, BCE. The literary allusions to the wheel began as a metaphor for the wandering soul, oscillating from a lower existence to a higher one, as a point on a spinning wheel will inevitably travel the circle's circumference. The magic wheel appeared on Greek amphora and coins as early as the third century BCE. In the ninth century, during the Roman Empire, Fortuna the goddess became more present as shrines were built in her name. To the Romans, Fortuna was a goddess who absorbed all others—a goddess of the state and individual, of classes both high and low.

The wheel of Fortune became a far more common visual motif in the medieval age, increasingly ubiquitous and ominous. Appearing both delicately miniature in illuminated manuscripts and towering in the gleaming glass of cathedral windows, the wheel served as a constant reminder of Fortuna's grasp on medieval denizens. Fortuna might also appear two-faced, Janus-like in her unpredictability. And she loomed large, dwarfing the poor souls strapped to her indifferent wheel. Each quarter of the wheel represented a stage; I shall reign, I reign, I have reigned, and I have no Kingdom. Merciless Fortuna was often depicted blindfolded and without Justice's scale, impartial to what was right or fair. She favored no one, and her wheel's stages suggesting the role of chance in time's passage. A roll of the dice or a spin of the wheel determined the future, present, the past, and oblivion.



Jutta Koether: *Fortune*  
May 9 - June 6, 2015

Bortolami  
New York, NY



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## FORTUNE

"You are nobody till somebody loves you...." (Frank Sinatra)

"Each thought should be considered a gesture" (Pierre Klossowski on Nietzsche)

The Wheel of Fortune is set in motion. "A room full of paintings" a third development - after *Champrovent* and *Maquis* these paintings interface as Fortune, in the company of "light fall" illuminations to enhance the visitors steps into stoical collapse and aloof enjoyment. A body being measured, conforming, de-forming its environment. A menacing effect. A twisted welcome painting. A calling card.

### 1. Formula Won Balthus

Lewis Hamilton in a Mercedes ad after winning a race; a sacrificial someone. A memory of Balthus's *The Mountain* at the Met, with Walking Stick, Wands, Bad Magic, Demonic Option, a muted one, Post Theatre of Cruelty. Inside a sleepwalker's time zone from another place, suspended in metallic air; barely holding up his own body while the other one is seen dreaming. "As if they come about on their own," says Lucian Freud on how paintings want to arrive in an artist's life. And they do. They are porous. The viewer becomes subject to the power of the picture's gaze. (190 x 250 cm)

### 2. Caterham Kobayashi Crash Balthus St. Firmin

In the medieval wing of the Met a headless sculpture stands holding in his head in his hands. St. Denis, decapitated, keeps carrying his head around, delivering a sermon, attempting to export consciousness, staying an erect column body in the middle of a crashing racecar. The "Bruised Grid;" a target, shield and a kind of spinning wheel itself. Commanding those breaking wheels around it; held together by thoughts, gestures, metallics and reds. Received by female legs with red slippers after a Balthus drawing. (220 x 170 cm)

### 3. A380 Holding Turner Chelsea Palette PdF

A grounded airplane, morphing into a creaturely body. From the business pages of a new German newspaper in the fall of 2014. Huge airplane, no infrastructure for it. About to be sent out again, "because their goal isn't to improve on what has been done before—but to totally re-imagine it". Thus concludes a recent commercial with air-to-air footage of the new A 380 in evening light. Signal gestures trying to catch each other in mental mid air. (220 cmx 170cm each, with small/ Fontana slit)

### 4. Tate BP Bacon Balthus PdF

A diptych with central figure split. A not fully visible Bacon triptych, "held" by porcelain lioness paws and Balthus drawing after Courbet's *Origin of the World*. There are balloon-apple-balls emotions rolling from each wing pouring into the middle where a man-woman attends. Piero della Francesca, Creature del Parto. Feet are planted on the floor the right in front of the left as if like her ancient counterparts she is confronting her destiny. Paintings must be accepted like cats: as beautiful and alluring yet elusive and ultimately incomprehensible. (220x 170 cm each, margin tuned to the grid leg in the painting)

### 5. HMTQ/ DCMG 1

Sovereign Women in Painting Update. Queen Elizabeth II and Angelina Jolie in room 1844 at Buckingham Palace from image circulating, October 10, 2014, a Honorary Damehood is given to this non-British subject. A very high honor for a youngish person. Communication occurs, sovereign women and the possibility of encountering and exposing a connection, a touch. Becoming witness to that strange moment of tenderness. Humanitarian and Actress all rolled in one Queen/Dame Sphere. A possibility of being touched across power systems and ages. (220 x 170 cm)

### 6. HMTQ/ DCMG 2

Transitions, US/European connections, similar to above yet a larger stage/landscape is laid out here... post pain, post desire. Competing, holding secrets, posing, playing for keeps, oozing titles and fortunes. Intercontinentally. Axis and support systems within the decor as well as the bodies. Feeling the powder room a power room. Each painting looking for an experimental interpreter. We don't know if this painting is happening before or after the play. Before we open the curtain or after the fall. (220 x 170 cm each with a slit, matching the size of one square bruised grid element)