

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FRANÇOISE GROSSEN

June 4 – August 14, 2015

Opening reception: Thursday, June 4, 6 – 8 pm

New York, May 21, 2015—Blum & Poe announces a survey exhibition of sculpture by Swiss-born artist Françoise Grossen. On view will be works from 1967–1991 including *Swan* (1967), loaned from the Museum of Arts and Design, New York and originally shown in the groundbreaking 1969 exhibition *Wall Hangings* at the Museum of Modern Art. This is Grossen's first solo presentation with Blum & Poe and her first survey in the United States.

Emerging in the late 1960s alongside contemporaries such as Eva Hesse, Sheila Hicks, and Lenore Tawney, Grossen sought to relinquish the traditional tools and methods of textile and fiber art, instead utilizing a free-hand braiding and knotting technique allowing for greater freedom and spontaneity in her process. Works appear simultaneously weightless and weighted, both masculine and feminine, all the while reinforcing their objecthood.

Grossen's knotted and plaited rope sculptures eschew the four edges that delimited traditional tapestry, and boldly enter the third dimension by hanging from the ceiling or unfolding directly onto the floor. Grossen pushes beyond this initial rupture with the rectangle and the wall to explore the weight of her material and its response to gravity, an investigation that aligns her art with broader artistic debates taking place in New York and elsewhere. (Jenelle Porter, *Fiber: Sculpture 1960–Present* [Boston: Institute of Contemporary Art, 2014], 198)

Having studied architecture and later textile design at Kunstgewerbeschule Basel and at UCLA with Bernard Kester in the 1960s, Grossen became keenly aware of her ability to bring fiber sculpture into unexpected and experimental realms (hanging from the ceiling, draped on the ground or over pedestals, floating in bodies of water). Grossen's interest in the weight and physical composition of her chosen material is evident in her earliest hanging manila rope sculptures, *Study for Embarcadero* (1970) and *Sisyphé* (1974), as well as in later hand-painted and dyed *Metamorphosis* (1987-1990) works. Humble materials, drawn from nature and manipulated in the studio, are coaxed into elegantly intertwined and draping forms, elevating the utilitarian to something extraordinary.

Françoise Grossen (b. 1943 in Neuchâtel, Switzerland) lives and works in New York City. Recent group exhibitions include *Fiber: Sculpture 1960–Present*, which was held at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston and traveled to the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH and the Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA (2014–2015). Her work is in international public and private collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Smithsonian Institution, Renwick Gallery, Washington, DC; and the State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia.