

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BLACK FEAST



DARJA BAJAGIĆ | MELVIN EDWARDS | MATIAS FALDBAKKEN | ROBERT GOBER | JENNY HOLZER | BARBARA KRUGER | JUSTIN MATHERLY

17 MARCH – 22 APRIL 2017, NEW YORK
PRIVATE VIEW: FRIDAY, 17 MARCH 6 – 8 PM

Simon Lee Gallery New York is pleased to present *Black Feast*, an exhibition of works that emerge from experiences of anxiety, protest and trauma, both direct and mediated. Through a wide range of voices, the exhibition will explore parallels between disparate communities and their relationships to personal and collective trauma. The works within *Black Feast* showcase how an individual's subjectivity is shaped not only in times of palpable crisis, but also amidst the unseeing violence of passive complacency. Either arising in explicit reaction or illustrative of psychological unrest, an artist's work can carry a collective sense of emergency.

The lynch fragments of Melvin Edwards and the concrete / metallic sculptures of Justin Matherly and Matias Faldbakken contain the illustrative semiology of trauma. These brutal assemblages carry with them narratives of disquiet and are at once both very specific and wide-ranging. In contrast to the abstract sculptures of Edwards, Matherly and Faldbakken, Barbara Kruger and Jenny Holzer each present work that showcase forms of protest and dissent. Kruger's self-referential piece portrays a growling leopard with a cynical verse decrying the repetitive nature of working within the art world. Holzer shares a work from her *Truisim* series, however this piece is especially unique as she has translated her famous series into Spanish. Lastly, Darja Bajagić and Robert Gober present documented tragedies. Gober presents a newspaper work that reflects on the persecution of homosexuals and Bajagić exhibits a piece from a series where she collaborated with an inmate in federal prison.

The title of the exhibition derives from the story *Sitt Marie Rose* by Etel Adnan, which reflects on the life and execution of Marie Rose Boulos during the Lebanese Civil War. It is at the story's end following Boulos's death that Adnan writes "*an execution is always a celebration. It is the dance of Signs and their stabilization in Death. It is the swift flight of silence without pardon. It is the explosion of absolute darkness among us. What can one do in this Black Feast but dance?*"

The exhibition will feature An Afternoon/Night with ACT UP: a celebration of DIVA TV organized by Nick Faust.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Darja Bajagić was born in 1990 in Podgorica, Montenegro and lives and works in New York, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include *Nobody Knows I'm Funny*, Carlos/Ishikawa, London, UK (2016); *Unlimited Hate*, Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst & Medien, Graz, Austria (2016); *Darja Bajagić*, White Flag Library, Saint Louis, MO (2016); *The Offal Truth*, New Galerie, Paris, France (2015); *Diesel*, Bed-Stuy Love Affair, New York, NY (2015); *C6ld c6mf6rt.*, ROOM

EAST, New York, NY (2014); *You've Been A Naughty Boy (...)*, Appendix Project Space, Portland, OR (2013). Selected group exhibitions include *Co-Workers*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France (2015); *Filter Bubble*, LUMA Westbau, Zürich, Switzerland (2015); *New Wave*, The Goss-Michael Foundation, Dallas, TX (2015); *89plus / Poetry Will Be Made By All!*, Moderna Museet, Museum of Modern Art, Stockholm, Sweden (2015); *Private Settings: Art After the Internet*, Museum of Modern Art Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland (2014); *Executive Producer*, Museum of Contemporary Art in Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico (2014); *Contemporary Drawing*, Fort Worth Drawing Center, Fort Worth, TX (2013).

Melvin Edwards was born in 1937 in Houston, TX and lives and works in New York, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include his touring retrospective *Melvin Edwards: Five Decades*, Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, OH (2016), Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, Canada (2016), NJ Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas, TX (2015); *Melvin Edwards*, Oklahoma Contemporary, Oklahoma, OK (2016). Selected group shows include *A Constellation*, Studio Museum, Harlem, New York, NY (2016); *the 56th Venice Biennale*, Venice, Italy (2015); *Witness: Art and Civil Rights in the Sixties*, Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH (2014).

Matias Faldbakken was born in 1973 in Hobro, Denmark and lives and works in Oslo, Norway. Recent solo exhibitions include *The Image Is Screen that Hides what it Means*, Le Mur Saint-Bon, Paris, France (2017); *Matias Faldbakken*, curated by Gesine Borchardt, CAPRI Düsseldorf, Germany (2015); *Overlap*, Galerie NEU, Berlin, Germany (2015); *Matias Faldbakken*, STANDARD (OSLO), Oslo, Norway (2014); *Matias Faldbakken*, curated by Anne Pontégnie, Le Consortium, Dijon, France (2013); *SACKS / TRUNKS*, Simon Lee Gallery, London, UK (2013). Selected group exhibitions include *The Eighth Climate (What does art do?)*: *11th Gwangju Biennale*, Gwangju, South Korea (2016); *Naturally Obscure*, Le Centre d'Art Passerelle, Brest, France (2016); *Future Light*, 2015 Vienna Biennale, Vienna, Austria (2015); *Collected by Thea Westreich Wagner and Ethan Wagner*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY and Centre Pompidou Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, France (2015); *Take Liberty!*, The National Museum of Art, Design & Architecture, Oslo, Norway (2014). In Fall 2017, a major solo exhibition will be on view at Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo, Norway.

Robert Gober was born in 1954 in Wallingford, CT and lives and works in New York, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include *Haunted House*, La Fondazione Prada, Milan, Italy (2015); *Robert Gober: The Heart is Not a Metaphor*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY (2014); *Work 1976-2007*, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel, Switzerland (2012). Selected group exhibitions include *The Beginning of Everything: Drawings from the Janie C. Lee, Louisa Stude Sarofim, and David Whitney Collections*, The Menil Collection, Houston, TX (2017); *Surrealism and Beyond*, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, The Netherlands (2016); *Unfinished: Thoughts Left Visible*, Metropolitan Museum of Art at The Met Breuer, New York, NY (2016); *Sculpture on the Move 1946-2016*, Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, Switzerland (2016); *The Duchamp Effect*, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, WA (2015); *America Is Hard to See*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY (2015); *LIFT: Contemporary Printmaking in the Third Dimension*, Knoxville Museum of Art, Knoxville, TN (2015); *PERFECT LOVERS. Art in the Time of AIDS*, Fundació Suñol, Barcelona, Spain (2014); *Out of the Ordinary*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C (2013).

Jenny Holzer was born in 1950 in Gallipolis, OH and lives and works in New York, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include *Jenny Holzer: Are You Alive?*, Lune Rouge and Art Projects Ibiza, Ibiza, Spain (2016); *Jenny Holzer: War Paintings*, Museo Correr, Four Doors Room, Venice, Italy (2015); *Projeto Parede: Jenny Holzer*, Museu de Arte Moderna de São Paulo, Brazil (2014); *Beg, Borrow and Steal*, Palm Springs Art Museum, Palm Springs, CA (2013); *Language Games*, Centro de Artes Visuales Helga de Alvear, Cáceres, Spain (2013). In 2008, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York organized *Protect Protect*, a retrospective of Holzer's work. Selected group exhibitions include *Three Centuries of American Art from the National Gallery of Art*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (2016); *Apartés 2015*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France (2015); *Identity XI*, curated by Bradley McCallum, NCA/Nichido Contemporary Art, Tokyo, Japan (2015); *Drawn to Language*, The Children's Museum of Art, New York, NY (2014); *From Gesture to Language*, Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai, China (2013).

Barbara Kruger was born in 1945 in Newark, NJ and lives and works in New York, NY and Los Angeles, CA. Recent solo exhibitions include *In the Tower: Barbara Kruger*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (2016); *Barbara Kruger, Untitled (Blind Idealism Is...)*, High Line Art, New York, NY (2016); *Barbara Kruger: Empatía*, Metro Bellas Artes, Mexico City, Mexico (2016); *Barbara Kruger: Belief+Doubt*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. (2012). Selected group exhibitions include *Under Arms. Fire & Forget 2*, Museum Angewandte

Kunst, Frankfurt, Germany (2016); *Cannibalism? On Appropriation in Art*, Zacheta National Gallery, Warsaw, Poland (2015); *Fire and Forget: On Violence*, KW Institute of Contemporary Art, Berlin, Germany (2015); *Take It or Leave It: Institution, Image, Ideology*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2014); *DLA Piper Series: Constellations*, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool, UK (2013).

Justin Matherly was born in 1972 in West Islip, New York, NY and lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Recent solo exhibitions include *Justin Matherly: sunrise*, Johann König, Berlin, Germany (2015); *Would that You were the last of the filth which You had to remove / why does your flesh shit?*, Marginal Utility, Philadelphia, PA (2010). Selected group exhibitions include *The Camera's Blind Spot*, ExtraCity Kunsthall, Antwerp, Belgium (2015); *Avatar and Avatism*, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf, Germany (2015); *Stars + Stripes: American Art of the 21st Century form the Goldberg Collection*, Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, Bathurst, Australia (2014); *A Triple Tour*, curated by Caroline Bourgeois, Conciergerie, Paris, France (2013).

SATURDAY, 18 MARCH 2017, 4PM: AN AFTERNOON/NIGHT WITH ACT UP: A CELEBRATION OF DIVA TV ORGANIZED BY NICK FAUST FEATURING A PANEL WITH JEAN CARLOMUSTO AND GREGG BORDOWITZ

DIVA TV (Damn Interfering Video Activist Television) was a lesbian video activist collective founded in New York City in 1989. It was an affinity group with ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) and worked to preserve ACT UP's demonstrations, civil disobedience actions and crowd reactions. They would edit the footage and insert pre-recorded scenes by artists/activists such as Ray Navarro and release the footage as episodic television to the general public to educate them about the AIDS crisis as well as providing a blueprint to people all over the country of how they too could take direct action to ends the AIDS crisis.

In the age of Trump it is vital to have a dialogue with past activist histories and to learn their strategies, tactics, successes and failures. DIVA TV stands as a model of radical direct video action and public education and serves as a major media art precedent. The program will consist of a number DIVA TV videos as well as a discussion afterwards with members from the collective.

Nick Faust was born in 1989 and is an artist, choreographer, curator, writer and activist based in New York City. He has written for *Art in America*, *New Inquiry*, *DIS Magazine* and others. He is a founding member of *Graphics and Visual Tactics*, a public art group spawned from ACT UP committed to projects concerning the societal issues of HIV. He is a founding member of *Match Cuts*, a monthly screening series dedicated to programming activist videos, video art, and Decolonial/LGBT/dance/sex/Marxist cinema in New York. His debut show and accompanying book, *Dance & Language: Expanded Choreography Now!*, will open at Meyohas in June.

Please note this event is free to the public, but booking is advised: events@simonleegallery.com / +1 (646) 678 5654.

For further press information, images and interview requests please contact: james@simonleegallery.com / +1 (646) 678 5654.

Image: Melvin Edwards, *Memory of Winter*, 1996, Welded steel, 33 x 17.1 x 21.9 cm (13 x 6 3/4 x 8 5/8 in.)