

**GBE
291 GRAND ST
NY NY 10002**

**HELL ON EARTH
JEANETTE MUNDT AND NED VENA**

MAY 13 – JUNE 17, 2018

OPENING RECEPTION: SUNDAY, MAY 13, 2018 from 6:00 – 8:00PM

It's come to the point now where I feel I have to wonder – is it right that there be a set of human beings who generally feel overconfident, and a set that feels underconfident? For action, it's necessary not to overthink, and for reflection, thinking is needed. If we spread the self-questioning around to all, will we as a society fail? It seems to me it's not so much a question of rights but of the sense of self. As a woman, looking back at history, we see that we haven't achieved all that much of historical note. Does this mean we are not capable of doing it? We wonder this our whole lives, while we study in school. Any impulse to achieve must be tempered by this historical reality. Also, we will never be as fast or strong as men without hormone treatment. What are men bad at? They aren't very good at knowing what they are feeling, at seeing how their emotions and fear made them make fun of a friend or leave a woman after sex. But if they know how much they are governed by their emotions, the way women know they are, will they crumble? It seems fun to be men, to look at the world as a sea of pussy, to give each other grief and then forget about it, to go to Vegas for a bachelor party. But the freedom to roam from town to town, boozing and fighting, requires the endless decision to leave, to be an individual, to be alone, and from the outside this does seem exhausting. Or maybe it seems wrong? Is it my dedication to human society that keeps me in my room, or is it laziness and the fear of being myself? I wish men would help me try to answer this question.

The male serial killer is, I think, after a moment of total, conscious surrender on the part of his victim – imagine the look in a woman's eyes when she realizes she will die by your hands, soon. But what is this surrender to, exactly? To him, as an individual, but why? To him, as a man, but why? It is to the masculine project of individuality (she surrenders to me), and to the superiority of masculinity (woman surrenders to man, and (therefore?) I am a man). Part of the history of civilization has been the process of changing sex roles: any orientation of society away from roles that simply were embodied, the way female lions hunt and male lions guard, must have required some cultural justification and also must have diminished the relevance of man's natural physical superiority. It was only a little more than two thousand years ago that Greek and Hebrew people wrote into the culture that man was superior to woman; this also coincided with their simultaneous inventions of the idea of a single cause of the universe. This belief system still dominates. Ilexa Yardley, a probably pseudonymous self-published author of many mostly unread books who nonetheless has a strong influence over a Nobel Prize-winning physicist, proposed the Circular Theory, which says that two, not one, is the true structure of the universe, two by its nature producing a circle as a result of mutual influence. Women (the idea of whom could perhaps be a metaphor) have fought for many years to attain the prospect of influencing the public and now-global cultural narrative by proving to men that we can communicate on their level; now we have to dig back into the suppressed other side of the circle and bring that all to light. Though I wouldn't necessarily invest in a future genderless society, it could come to pass; even so there's still quite a bit to say about the past and present.

Maybe marriage is sacred, a law that near guarantees a woman's influence over a man. Ned and Jeanette are married. For this show, Jeanette has made paintings of Ned's paintings, which also are on display, of his own tattoos. According to current laws of conduct, it is difficult to say if this is right, or if this is wrong.

- Elise Duryee-Browner

This is Jeanette Mundt and Ned Vena's third two-person exhibition together and their first at Gavin Brown's enterprise. They both live and work in New York.

