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Free Fall: Lynda Benglis and Polly Apfelbaum

June 12–July 24, 2015

Gallery hours:
Tues–Sat: 10 am–6 pm

Summer hours during July/August:
Mon–Fri: 10 am–6 pm



Left: Lynda Benglis, *Untitled*, 2014, handmade paper, wire, acrylic, gold leaf, 89 x 8 x 11 inches. Right: Polly Apfelbaum, *Blue Haired Nirvana*, 1997, synthetic velvet and fabric dye, 19 x 7 feet, dimensions variable

Locks Gallery is pleased to present *Free Fall*, a conversation between the works of Lynda Benglis and Polly Apfelbaum, on view from June 12 through July 24, 2015. Both pioneering interdisciplinary artists have continually worked to subvert our own assumptions of medium specificity through work that simultaneously celebrates sumptuous materiality and the possibilities for the social and cultural implications of form.

While Helen Frankenthaler and Jackson Pollack took the physical act of painting to the floor, Benglis saw that the post-minimalist art object would remain “fallen” with her iconic latex and foam floor works of the late 1960s. This site for painting was further expanded upon by Polly Apfelbaum, who took the floor as her artistic ground in which to intuitively arrange her synthetic velvet and fabric dye works and more recent rug pieces.

For this exhibition, Benglis will debut a new body of paper sculptures made in her studio outside of Sante Fe, New Mexico. In these works, Benglis revisits the elongated wall-hung forms of the wax paintings of the late 1960s, pigmented plaster *Totems*, and glitter and painted plaster *Hoofers* of the early 1970s. Their structural base is chicken wire, a support that Benglis has revisited and reinterpreted with a variety of sculptural mediums throughout her career. In these new works, she does not smother it with other material but instead molds the paper deliberately into each facet of the chicken wire, making a thin skin for the inherent architectural structure. This surface is then explored with acrylic paint, gold leaf, and encaustic. Chicken wire has allowed Benglis to re-form Minimalism’s grid quite literally into a more fluid form—stretching, elongating, and warping the gridded material into

[continued on reverse]

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an amorphous other. Early cast paper works will join these new pieces along with an exemplary early pleated metal work built upon a structure of bronze mesh.

Both artists are currently employing the open forms and instinctive techniques of post-Minimalism with the intimacy of the handmade. But where the forms of Lynda Benglis explore how the visual influences the bodily or our “proprioception,” the visceral reactions Apfelbaum’s work evokes are meant to tap into our cultural imagination. In her floor pieces, installations, and prints, the patterns and colors are a site of specific personal and cultural histories ranging from the playful palettes of the Power Puff Girls, the iconic primary spots of *Wonder Bread*, to the stripes of *Gene Davis*. On view will be an early “Splat” floor piece from the late 1990s, *Blue Haired Nirvana*, exhibited for the second time ever.

Apfelbaum’s floor pieces can have numerous iterations as her improvisational on-site arrangements vary depending on the place. This process is echoed in her large-scale monoprints executed at Durham Press, where Apfelbaum inks shaped blocks without a set layout and then playfully organizes them on triple-thick handmade paper. The new diamond monoprints reflect the influence of her stay at the American Academy in Rome with the geometric mosaic-like forms that echo her encounters of the Cosmati floors. Her new *Time Machine* prints utilize a split fountain technique to make gradient stripes, revisiting the “rainbow rolls” popularized by rock and psychedelic concert posters and deliberately playing with influential art historical stripe motifs.

Benglis and Apfelbaum’s audacious forms can be seen to immediately foreground material and structure. But their playful embrace of intuition and a rich range of references place the work in a site where both recent and distant histories and our imaginations collide.

Lynda Benglis was born in Lake Charles, LA and graduated from Newcomb College with a BFA in 1964. The 2009–2011 traveling retrospective *Lynda Benglis* visited six venues in Europe and the United States, including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles and the New Museum, New York. Benglis’ work is in numerous public collections including the Guggenheim Museum of Art, NY; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; the Museum of Modern Art, NY; the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the Tate Modern, London; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

New York-based Polly Apfelbaum has exhibited extensively throughout North America and Europe. Her recent solo exhibitions were held at the Contemporary Art Museum, St. Louis and the Paine Gallery, Massachusetts College of Art, Boston. In 2003, the ICA Philadelphia organized a retrospective that traveled to the Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati and the Kemper Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO. The artist’s work is in numerous museum collections including MoMA, the Whitney Museum of Art, L.A. County Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Dallas Museum of Art and Musee d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.

Locks Gallery is located at 600 Washington Square South in Philadelphia, PA. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 am to 6 pm. During the months of July and August, the gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 10 am to 6 pm. For additional information, please contact Locks Gallery at 215.629.1000, 215.629.3868 fax, or info@locksgallery.com.

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