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Beverly Semmes, *Winter Wheat*, 2021, ink and acrylic over photograph printed on canvas, 64 x 40 inches

BEVERLY SEMMES

Marigold

October 28 - December 23, 2022

Opening Reception Friday, October 28, 5:00 - 7:00 PM



Locks Gallery is pleased to present ***Beverly Semmes: Marigold***, the artist's inaugural show with the gallery. Semmes, a New York based artist, is known internationally for her large-scale installations featuring oversized, handmade sculptural dresses mounted directly on the wall. Her work spans a wide variety of media including clay, fabric, glass, photography, drawing. This exhibition will highlight work from the past two decades, showcasing her textile work - including a new monumental fabric installation commissioned by Alexander McQueen - in addition to her acclaimed 'Red Pot' ceramic sculptures and new mixed media works on canvas.

In Semmes' oversized fabric works, scale serves as a metaphor for power. Textile work and dressmaking, which have traditionally been undervalued and disparagingly labeled as 'women's work', become elevated, literally and figuratively, as it overwhelms the gallery space with the fabric pooling and spilling over the floor. It is noteworthy that her dresses give cover to a body that is absent. The body - particularly the female body - has always been implied and explored in Semmes work.

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[continued on reverse]

The theme of the female body as a vessel - an object for carrying life, and its role as an erotic object - reaches across Semmes' interdisciplinary practice. The paintings on view are from her ongoing *Feminist Responsibility Project (FRP)*, a series that the artist began in 2003 after inheriting a collection of vintage Penthouse magazines from a neighbor. She took pages from these publications and, in an attempt to shield both viewer and subject, drew and painted over the bodies, offering enigmatic glimpses of parts of the original image while concealing others. Vessels appear here in painted form, and the erotic source material is transformed; in the end, the partial concealment works to amplify the colorful montage. Originally these were magazine sized works on paper, but when in 2018 Semmes participated in the Carnegie International, she expanded her *FRP* work through a series of larger scale paintings, transferring and enlarging them to printed canvas. The scale becomes life-size, confronting the viewer in a new way and inviting a different kind of voyeurism.



Beverly Semmes, photo credit: Adam Kramer



Semmes' work revels in contradictions and tensions: concealing and revealing; abstract and graphic; fantasy and reality; and the creation of non-functional pieces out of traditional materials. She takes a medium often expected to be pristine or symmetrical or refined - like velvet or ceramic - and makes it raw and clunky. Her Red Pots are irregular and distorted forms, with a crude tactility. These polarities work to create an intermediary space inviting discourse on the paradoxes surrounding the representation of the feminine.

BEVERLY SEMMES was born in Washington, DC. She received an MFA from the Yale School of Art in addition to a BA and BFA from the Boston Museum School, Tufts University. Semmes' work was included in the 57th Carnegie International, curated by Ingrid Schaffner, and earlier this year she was included in the group exhibition, Witch Hunt, organized by Connie Butler and Anne Ellegood, at the Hammer Museum and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Solo exhibitions include the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, DC; the ICA Philadelphia; the MCA Chicago; the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio; the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; and an exhibition co-organized by the Grinnell College Museum of Art, Grinnell and the Frances Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs. Her work is included in the permanent collections of the Albright Knox Art Gallery, the Carnegie Museum of Art, the Denver Art Museum, the Hammer Museum, the Hirshhorn Museum, the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, the Nasher Sculpture Center, the Walker Art Center, and the Whitney Museum of American Art among others. The artist lives and works in New York.