

Freaky Flowers

April 1 - May 28, 2023

Opening: Saturday, April 1, 5-7pm

“Until we can comprehend the beguiling beauty of a single flower, we are woefully unable to grasp the meaning and potential of life itself.” - Virginia Woolf

“I saw the entire room, my entire body, and the entire universe covered with red flowers, and in that instant, my soul was obliterated...” - Yayoi Kusama

Freaky Flowers, a show that has been four years in the making, will open Saturday, April 1. The prolonged process has moved time between invitations. We are thrilled to announce the inclusion of 27 artists contributing to the visual riot of this exhibition: Nicole Basilone, Annie Bielski, Han Cao, Jennifer Dierdorf, Sheila Gallagher, Valerie Hammond, Allison Hester, Huê Thi Hoffmaster, Melinda Kiefer Santiago, Melora Kuhn, Judith Linhares, Becca Mann, Katie Minford, Sarah Alice Moran, Taylor Morgan, Donna Moylan, Jo Nigoghossian, Alison Owen, Amy Ross, Sonia Corina Ruscoe, Allison Schulnik, Ellen Siebers, Eleni Smolen, Caitlin Rose Sweet, Becca Van K, Julia Von Eichel, and Darren Waterston.

Freaky Flowers is a somewhat irrational show. We indulge the subject, a forever beloved, captured form: *La floraison!* Their chromatic ebullience, aromatic overwhelm, and shape extraordinaire. A bouquet will topple our defenses, an open bloom will drown our senses. The *brièveté de la vie* of flowers from bulb to flower to compost is a heightened kind of concision. Beautiful and brutal.

Before her storied death, Ophelia disperses flowers to the court, each bloom offered as a message, a meditated departure. This is not madness. We must have had rough wads of flowers. *Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.* We will take matters into our own hands, there isn't time.

But for a moment, let's look back...What artist has left the subject untouched? We have Margareta Haverman's *A Vase of Flowers*, 1716, Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, 1887, Monet's *Garden at Giverny*, 1900, Klimt's *Bauerngarten*, 1907, O'Keeffe's *Jimson Weed/White Flower No. 1*, 1932, Alma Thomas's *Lunar Rendezvous—Circle of Flowers*, 1969, Kusama's *Flower Obsession*, 2018, Ann Craven's *Pensées*, 2020. Can you hold them together in your mind's eye?

And here, in *Freaky Flowers*, artists engender our muse with exuberance, intimacy, ferocity, ache and awe. Of her process, Sonia Ruscoe recalls, “The paint kept getting wetter and wetter. Around lilac season that year I really started losing myself in the work, in the flowers, overwhelmed by what the world was coughing up.” Oh the terrible beauty of it all. Lilac wine, I feel unsteady!

- * French: *La floraison!*, the state of flowering
brièveté de la vie, the shortness of life
- * Ophelia: William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (1599–1601)
- * “hard rough wads of flowers,” Jenn Dierdorf, artist statement.
- * “Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.” Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*.
- * “terrible beauty,” W.B. Yeats, *Easter, 1916*.
- * “Lilac wine, I feel unsteady,” Jeff Buckley, *Grace*, 1994.

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