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HAL BROMM GALLERY

90 West Broadway at Chambers Street

Tribeca New York 10007

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Contact: Emily Nicole Eber

Katie Svensson

212-732-6196

info@halbromm.com

Metamorphosis: Summer Group Show

23 June - 19 August 2021

Featuring works by Carlos Alfonzo, Christian Brechneff, Emily Nicole Eber, Jean Foos, Luis Frangella, Bobby G., Barbara Kulicke, Alex Markwith, Natalya Nesterova, Rick Prol, Joey Tepedino, and David Wojnarowicz



Joey Tepedino, *River*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, 24" x 36"

Guest curated by Emily Nicole Eber and Katie Svensson, Metamorphosis is an exhibition exploring the psychological and emotional experience of the pandemic through color and imagery, featuring a range of artists whose figural works take on new meanings within the context of the past year and a half. The exhibition tells a story of loss, isolation, injustice, and change, while simultaneously expressing the excitement and hope for our gradual return to normalcy. In essence, the show communicates the profound transformation caused by the

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pandemic. Throughout, the adaptability of the human race has been tested: as we negotiated the need for interpersonal connection, exercised our right to protest against institutional injustice, and as we lent a helping hand to those in need, all while remaining masked and physically distanced. Now that the world is returning to ‘normal’ this exhibition reflects back on our journey, and provides a space of mourning, dialogue, and joy found in the promise of a brighter future.

As the Pandemic forced us to isolate, habits changed to accommodate new mask policies and “social distancing” in order to keep ourselves safe. Sickness and death loomed large, and the sudden loss of loved ones without the possibility of traditional gatherings for mourning made coping more painful. Some channeled sorrow and fear into cooking, baking, or other hobbies, and many artists took time to explore emotion in a new light. Throughout, we stayed connected through zoom chats, phone calls, text messages, and emails.



Natalya Nesterova, *Two Birds with Fish*, 2017, oil on canvas, 24 x 18”

We faced institutional racism within the United States and the failures and lies of the Trump Presidency. The Black Lives Matter movement asked us to re-assess our internal biases and fight for human rights, as we finally grasped the consistent police brutality that has plagued our country for decades. We educated ourselves, we changed, we mobilized, and we protested

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for what is right in honor of all of those that we have lost. Moreover, the government's inept response to the global pandemic reminded many of an earlier time when the AIDS epidemic was ignored. The art of David Wojnarowicz mirrored his rage over government inaction during the time of this earlier pandemic. Unfortunately, AIDS is still with us, a lethal disease without a vaccine.



Rick Prol, *Tightrope Walkers*, 1984, acrylic on canvas, 36 x 44"

We cannot deny that the Pandemic and the unprecedented challenges that followed caused a transformation within ourselves, our society, and our world. We blossomed into a coping 'new normal' that we could have never imagined. This grand metamorphosis is what we aim to capture with this eclectic selection of works. The anxiety, isolation, grief and anger experienced during this time is expressed in many of the recent works on view including Rick Prol's, Emily Nicole Eber's and Joey Tepedino's. Other artists' works take on new meanings viewed through the lens of the pandemic. The work of the late artist Carlos Alfonzo represents the chaos and the gloom felt at the beginning of our isolation. While, Bobby G's *Whoosh!* is an overwhelming joyous piece that reflects the electric buzz of excitement that accompanies our return to pre-pandemic activities!

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Barbara Kulicke, *Untitled (Rose)*, 1998, signed and dated by artists, watercolor on paper, framed: 8 x 10"

Christian Brechneff, Alex Markwith, Natalya Nesterova, Jean Foos, and Barbara Kulicke's works all speak to the process of transformation. Brechneff's *Sunset Series 17* in tracking the changing light against the St. Martin sky, captures its profound effect on the landscape beneath it. Alex Markwith's pieces reminds one of a construction site, alluding to the personal and societal projects undertaken throughout the pandemic. Natalya Nesterova's work references different aspects of transformation: her *Birds with Fish* plays on the relationship between death and life, or reincarnation; while her piece *Baker* reminisces on all the baking we did while stuck at home. Jean Foos' *Belly* references the feeling of 'rebirth' that come from emerging from our isolation and returning to pre-pandemic practices. Barbara Kulicke's flowers are -sometimes budding, sometimes blooming- symbols of our growth during the pandemic and the burgeoning hope we have for the future.

Luis Frangella's *Untitled (Face)*, looming above the entire exhibition quite voyeuristically, reminds us that we are always changing, regardless of external events. It's facial asymmetry and constantly changing visage, depending on which angle it is viewed from, represents our fluidity as humans: that we are all constantly changing. Together, these works create a lively, and at times chaotic, space that reflects all of the extreme emotions felt within the uncertain journey of the pandemic.

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Carlos Alfonzo, *DWG Scroll*, 1984, ink on paper, 12 x 96", signed ALF 84

Carlos Alfonzo:

Born in Havana in 1950, Alfonzo was exiled from Cuba after being deemed undesirable as a gay man. He left in July 1980 during the Mariel boatlift. Upon his arrival, Alfonzo settled in Miami where he lived and worked until his untimely death from AIDS-related complications in 1991. Leaving Cuba allowed him to embrace and explore his sexuality, and he was quickly embraced artistically in the United States. Alfonzo was a painter known for his vibrant neo-Expressionistic style, as Victor Barrenechea wrote, "He filled canvas after canvas with wildly energetic and anxiously expressive renderings of raw emotion, despair, and alienation." After his death, Alfonzo's work was included in the 1991 Whitney Biennial. A 1998 exhibition, *Triumph of the Spirit: Carlos Alfonzo, A Survey, 1975 –1991* opened at the Miami Art Museum and then traveled to the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, DC. Alfonzo's work is included in both collections. His work *Ceremony of the Tropics, 1984-86* is on permanent view at Miami's Santa Clara Metrorail Station. The installation, created with hand-painted ceramic tiles, was a project of Miami's Art in Public Places program curated by Cesar Trasobares.

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Christian Brechneff, *Pastel Sunset Series 17*, 2020, Images 1-6 (Shown Images 1&2), Pastel on Bugra Hahnenmühle paper, Each 9" x 12", 9" x 82" overall (dimension variable)

Christian Brechneff:

Brechneff was born in the Belgian Congo in 1950, raised in Switzerland and later came to study in the United States. In 1975 he received a Masters of Art degree from London's College of Art. Known internationally for his exuberantly expressive pastel and oil landscapes as well as his ruddy ink flower drawings, Brechneff has won numerous awards. His work has been exhibited in museums and galleries across the globe including Daniel Blaise Thorens Fine Art Gallery in Basel, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the National Gallery in Athens, Karouzou Gallery in Zurich, and now at Hal Bromm Gallery in Tribeca.

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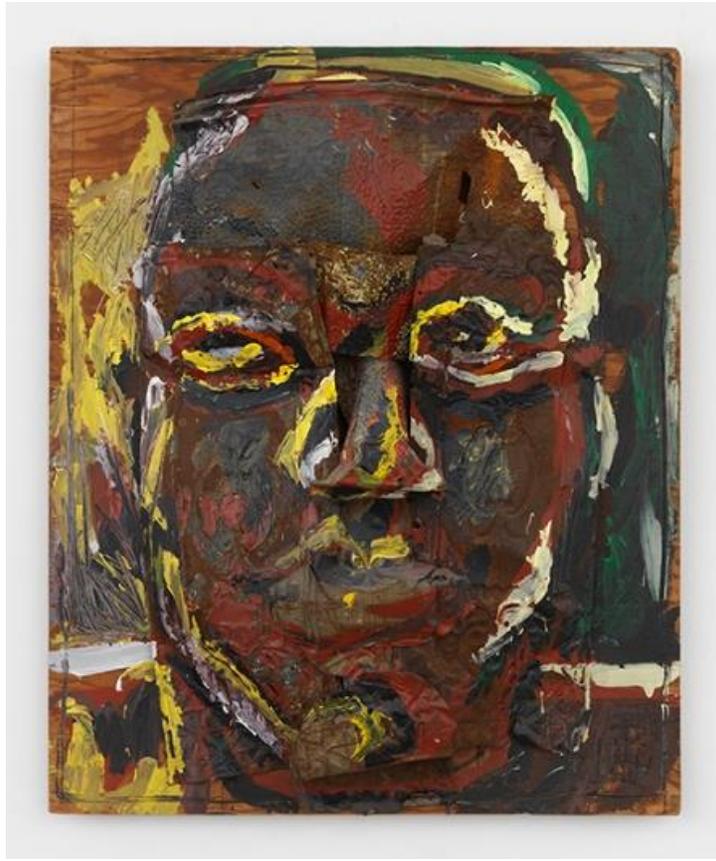


Emily Nicole Eber, *Shadow Dancers*, 2021, mixed media, 21 x 20 ½ x 2 ½"

Emily Nicole Eber:

Born in Brooklyn, New York in 2003, Eber attended Fiorello H. Laguardia High School and will be continuing her art education at FIT in the Fall of 2021. She focuses on including elements of design, and emphasizing the beauty of form within her work -whether it is abstract, realistic, or both- by mixing patterns with something that normally would not be composed of a pattern. She takes the viewer along on a journey of visual discovery, to show the complexity and beauty of the everyday that might go unnoticed otherwise.

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Luis Frangella, *Untitled (Face)*, 1983, Acrylic paint on mixed media sculpture, 46 ½ x 38 ½”

Luis Frangella:

A leading figure of the East Village scene in the early 1980s, Luis Frangella (1944-1990) was a figurative, postmodern painter and sculptor. Frangella earned a Master of Architecture at the Universidad de Buenos Aires in 1972 and began painting at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where he worked as a Research Fellow for the Center for Advanced Visual Studies from 1972 to 1976. In 1976, he moved to New York City where he painted huge “street” murals on construction site walls, abandoned Hudson River piers and in the nightclubs of the East Village and Tribeca. Equally at ease with painting and sculpture, Luis Frangella’s content and form alternated between refined delicacy and robust muscularity. His works have been exhibited internationally and are represented in important public and private collections. Tragically, on December 7, 1990 he died of AIDS.

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Jean Foos, *Belly*, 2017, Acrylic paint on packing forms, 8 x 5 ½ x 2"

Jean Foos:

Jean Foos is a NYC based visual artist. Primarily an abstract painter, Foos has developed sculptural pieces that play with the same grid structure and tactile qualities of her paintings. Along with painting, Jean has a passion for design that archives and elevates the work of her fellow artists—poets, painters, photographers, and performers. A book of her postcard drawings (over other artists' gallery invitations), *Cannonball Lagoon*, has been published by Ragged Sky Press. Her graphic work has appeared in *BOMB Magazine* and in the Brooklyn Museum's *Agitprop!* exhibition. Currently her work is displayed in NY State Representative Jessica Ramos's office (Jackson Heights), and Hal Bromm Gallery (Tribeca).

The raw foundations of my new work are objects rescued from the continuous (consumer society) flow of discarded packing materials. Unpacked from new pencil sharpeners, computers, keyboards, humidifiers, shoes and the like, I often keep their quiet industrial color but sometimes bathe them in iridescent metallic paint. Their shapes are then covered with painted veil-like patterns that hide and protect with over-painted grids, providing an unexpected optical mix of color that honors the forms they attempt to cover up. Inverting the need to forget, the pieces counteract the end user's reflex to discard and erase by remembering something new - Jean Foos

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Bobby G (Robert Goldman), *Whoosh!*, 1983, oil and aluminum paint on canvas, 67 x 65"

Boby G:

Robert Goldman, formerly known as Bobby G, was born in 1948 and attended the University of California at Los Angeles between 1966 and 1969. In 1973 he graduated from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, participating in their graduate fellowship program in 1974. Later, in 1980, Goldman co-founded ABC No Rio, a collectively run center for art and activism at 156 Rivington Street, where he organized the Absurdities Show in April 1981. Goldman exhibited his work at New York City venues including Artists Space, Hal Bromm Gallery, the Mudd Club, P.S. 1, and Semaphore Gallery throughout the 1980s. Robert Goldman has also exhibited at institutions including the Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, PA; Austin Museum of Art, Austin, TX; Constantine Post, Cologne, Germany, MoMA P.S. 1, New York; and Studio Corrado Levy, Milan, Italy. In addition, he has received fellowships and grants from prestigious foundations including the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, Adolf and the Esther Gottlieb Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship for Artists.

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Rick Prol, *Untitled (Pepsi-Cola)* from No Cats For Sale Series, 2021, acrylic on canvas, 40 x 30"

Rick Prol:

Rick Prol is a New York based artist who received a B.F.A from the Cooper Union in 1980. From 1982 onward, he began showing his exuberant works throughout New York City galleries including a solo exhibition at Hal Bromm Gallery in 1984. His cartoonish figures in dystopian urban scenes are simultaneously humorous and horrific. Boldly painted in vibrant colors, his works pinpoint human follies and suffering in an absurd and uniquely stylized way. Prol's work is in many private and public collections including the Smithsonian Libraries Collection, the Hirschhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC, the Contemporary Museum of Art, Chicago, the Museum of Modern Art, NYC and the Guggenheim Museum, among others. Moreover, Prol's work has been exhibited at Leeahn Gallery in South Korea, Kaj Forsblom Gallery in Finland, The Dorian Grey Gallery, and Hal Bromm Gallery here in Tribeca.

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Barbara Kulick, *Untitled (Purple Tulips)*, 1998, signed and dated by artist, framed: 11 ¼"x 14 ½"

Barbara Kulicke:

The vibrant energy of Kulicke's flowers is transmitted through her brush; her paintings sparkle with the fresh colors of the garden. She used color to represent flowers in a variety of abstract watercolors, along with representative images in oil, watercolor, ink and pencil. Barbara Kulicke was featured in over twenty one-person exhibitions and her work was included in numerous group shows throughout the United States and abroad. Barbara Kulicke's work is represented in private and public collections internationally. Throughout her extensive career, she produced works in many dimensions and materials, including a major corporate mural commissioned on slate. Her honors included the Fellowship Award for Artistic Excellence bestowed by The New Jersey State Council of the Arts.

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Alex Markwith, *Rupture*, 2019, acrylic, fabric, twine, wood, wire, metal and plastic on canvases, 30x 37 x 5"

Alex Markwith:

Alex Markwith is an American artist who graduated from Rhode Island School of Design (BFA Painting, 2011), and has exhibited in many cities including New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Helsinki and Paris. Working almost exclusively in abstraction, his work combines painting, drawing and sculpture, in varying proportions, with each piece being a hybrid of the three. Juxtaposing different textures, positive and negative space, different shades of black, neon and metallic colors, his work is playful yet grounded due to his use of construction supplies throughout his work, which references the ethos of any New York city street: lively, loud, and forever under construction.

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Natalya Nesterova, *White Roses*, 1993, oil on canvas, 35 x 35"

Natalya Nesterova:

Natalya Nesterova, a figurative artist, became a member of the Artists' Union of the USSR in 1969, a short year after graduating from Moscow's Surikov Art Institute. She was soon considered a leading member of the left wing of the Union, and at age twenty-two took part in the exhibits of the Young Moscow Artists. Creating works in a figurative primitivist manner while often depicting grotesque imagery, Nesterova was sometimes accused of undermining the foundations of Russian professional artistic training. The appeal and popularity of her work seemed only enhanced by such critiques. Nesterova returns often to the theme of fate and enlightenment with religious connotations and elements of theater. At the opening of her major 1992 retrospective at the Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal, Nesterova was asked to explain the meaning of her works. In halting English, she explained that she wants the viewer to find their own meaning in her work.

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Joey Tepedino, *Thoughts Are Alive*, 2021, mixed media on canvas, \$400

Joey Tepedino:

Joey Tepedino is a self-taught artist based in Pennsylvania and has been painting for over 15 years. He considers his art a reflection of the anxieties and fears that captivate his inner psyche. In May of 2021, Tepedino debuted his work in a group show at Connexions Gallery in Easton, Pennsylvania.

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David Wojnarowicz, *Untitled (For Act Up)*, 1990, silkscreen, Framed: 49 x 29.5", each: 23 x 27"

David Wojnarowicz:

David Wojnarowicz (1954 - 1992) was an independent prodigy. As a run-away street hustler at a young age, Wojnarowicz developed an uncanny ability to find beauty in the gritty street life around him. His stencil work was eventually recognized by many New York galleries, elevating avant-garde street art into the Downtown Milieu. Wojnarowicz refused to reduce his creativity into a single medium. Instead, he expanded his techniques, producing collages, films, photographs, poems and sculptures. After his friend and lover's, Peter Hujar, death of AIDS in 1987, Wojnarowicz's work moved into much more explicit activism and political content, notably around the injustices, social and legal, inherited in the response to the AIDS epidemic. In 1992, Wojnarowicz died of an AIDS related illness himself, but his works' ethos still carries the weight and urgency of this horrible virus that has yet to be cured to this day.