

# HAL BROMM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## *Faces //*

On View: 20 December 2022 - 31 March 2023

Opening: 20 December 2022, 6 - 8pm



Roger Cutforth, *Portrait of Sherrie Levine*, 1984

Featuring works by Olasunkanmi Akomolehin, Frédéric Amat, Craig Coleman, Diego Cortez, Roger Cutforth, Keith Davis, Jimmy DeSana, Tim Fite, Jean Foos, Luis Frangella, Timothy Greenfield-Sanders, Deborah Kass, Tom Keough, Ariane Lopez-Huici, Anja Marais, Thomas Micchelli, Natalya Nesterova, Letty Nowak, Victor Pesce, Lucio Pozzi, Rick Prol, Ted Rosenthal, Abbey Rosko, Gary Schneider, Pamela Sneed, Anthony Viti, David Wojnarowicz, and Rey Zorro

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Hal Bromm Gallery is pleased to present *FACES II*, the second iteration of a two-part exhibition examining the use of the human face as subject matter in contemporary art. The exhibition showcases over 30 works by artists who, through a variety of mediums, highlight the dual role of the face as a primary vehicle for human expression as well as a source of intimate and complex emotions centered around identity, adversity, and vulnerability.

*FACES II* offers a contemporary look at the classical role of portraiture, refuting the idea of representational figurative art as a form of vanity or signifier of intellect. Instead, the current exhibition centers on the duality of the human experience, and the contrast between inner emotions and outward performativity. The works on display are expressive and energetic, using subjective interpretations of the face to emphasize the pervasive daily struggle to unite different components of gender identity, societal oppression, individual choice, and social anonymity.

From a variety of different cultures and backgrounds, the presented artists use the face as a lens to examine the multitude of ways in which identity is structured or fabricated, rewriting the ways in which portraits can be used to question and deconstruct foundations of individuality.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Olasunkanmi Akomolehin is a Nigerian-born visual artist. His naturalistic portraits are inspired by the aggregate of human emotions, capturing an authentic reality in his subjects, beyond public-facing facades, through the use of color.

Frédéric Amat is a Spanish painter whose work has never been strictly confined to an exhibition setting. His open conception of painting, along with his experience illustrating books and designing stage sets for operas, has led him to integrate multiple artistic languages into his practice including spontaneous and deceptively subtle abstract paintings, architectural interventions, and large-scale installations that engage with and distort audience perception.

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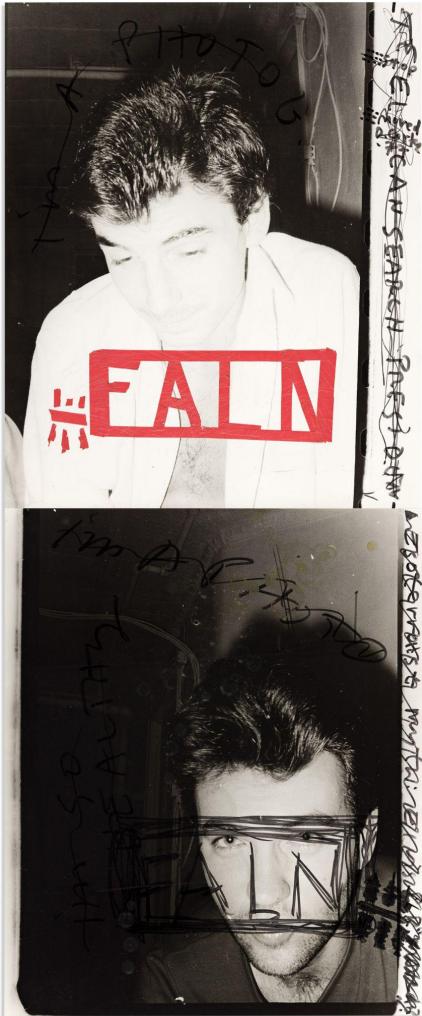


Frédéric Amat

Craig Coleman (1961-1995) was an American artist and prominent figure in the East Village Art Scene of the 1980s, producing a prodigious body of work in various mediums often using found materials. His work is raw and evocative, drawing on primitivism to record his personal struggles and observations with a distinctive visual lexicon of pictographic silhouettes.

Diego Cortez (1946-2021) was an American filmmaker and art curator closely associated with the no wave period in New York City. He was co-founder of the Mudd Club and curator of the watershed 1981 New York/New Wave show at PS1, cited as one of the most consequential art exhibitions of the 20th century and credited with bringing then aspiring artist Jean-Michel Basquiat to fame. A linchpin of 1980s downtown New York, Cortez championed the radical artistic practices of the time which merged different media, from painting, collage, graffiti, performance, and music.

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Diego Cortez and Jimmy Desana

Roger Cutforth (1944 - 2019) was a British artist who was represented early in his career by the New York gallery John Gibson, Lisson Gallery in London and several others. Cutforth's career also included exhibitions with Hal Bromm Gallery. Cutforth was one of five artists featured in a group exhibition *New Work* (1980) along with Mac Adams, Dan Graham, John Hilliard and Jeff Wall. Mac Adams, Dan Graham and Roger Cutforth were close friends, and among Cutforth's photographic works are a series of multi-faceted portraits of fellow artists and friends. Those works captured photographically collaged views reflecting various aspects of the subject's persona that present a sense of caught motion and evolving expression.

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Keith Davis (1954-1987) was a New York-based artist and graphic designer. During the '80s Davis was active in the East Village art scene both as an artist and a graphic designer and took great joy in combining and contrasting high and low culture. Working with artists such as Nan Goldin, Peter Hujar, Hope Sandrow, and David Wojnarowicz, he often traded artwork for design. Tragically, he died of complications related to AIDS in 1987 at the age of 32.

Jimmy DeSana (1949-1990), a key figure in the New York downtown scene of the 1970s and 80s, created a body of photography that evinces a singular style typified by concealed figures, saturated colors, and surreal mise-en-scène, with subject matter that index the artist's fascination with American suburbia and queer fetish subculture in equal measure. His staged images of the human body and portraits of cultural icons such as Yoko Ono, David Byrne, and Debbie Harry, capture the avant-garde spirit of a defining moment in the City's history.

Tim Fite is a Brooklyn-based musician and multimedia artist who creates black and white drawings that occasionally have a musical or performative component. His intricate artworks center on emotional and political truth-telling, creating intricate narratives that allegorize social structures and the human condition.

Jean Foos is a New York-based abstract artist known for her early involvement with the Downtown Art Community of the 1980s and 90s. Foos works in painting, relief sculpture and site-specific installation. Exhibitions of her work favor offbeat, ad hoc urban settings: crumbling piers, abandoned military housing and community gardens. Using a varied and reductive visual language she transforms mundane objects with painted veils of lines and colors. Foos is also a designer creating books and other media to archive and elevate the work of her fellow artists—poets, painters, photographers, and performers.

Luis Frangella (1944-1990) was an Argentinian-born figurative, postmodern painter and sculptor and seminal member of the East Village art scene that emerged in the early 1980s. Confident with unconventional mediums, Frangella often worked directly on the streets, in clubs, or with urban debris, creating raw "street" murals of the human figure portrayed with expressive gestures and a brittle emotional tone that reflected urban life and values.

Timothy Greenfield-Sanders is a contemporary portrait photographer and filmmaker who has been photographing large-format portraits of cultural figures, porn stars, and global leaders since the late 1970s. Greenfield-Sanders often produces his

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photographs in large, thematic series featuring groups of people who are united by one aspect of their identity such as transgender Americans, baby boomers, movie stars, and individuals connected to the art world. Greenfield-Sanders has over 700 images in the collections of both MoMA and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.



Timothy Greenfield-Sanders

Deborah Kass is a contemporary American artist. With a practice spanning across media and disciplines, Kass' work is notable for her pointed feminist critique. Through her use of appropriation, she often mimics the work and styles of male artists to comment on and rewrite the patriarchal narrative of art history. Often working in series, Kass forms a poignant and didactic political commentary while retaining a sense of self-reference with her autobiographical paintings, lyrics, and prose.

Tom Keough is a Brooklyn-based visual artist. His paintings, created in both oil and watercolor, capture both the urban NYC environment and the beauty of the Catskills, inviting viewers to experience widely differing landscapes with a vision that is both familiar and mysterious.

Ariane Lopez-Huici is a New York-based photographer whose work focuses on the human body, transgressing the conventional canon of beauty. Accentuating the shadowy areas of the human adventure, she uses black and white photography with a pronounced grain and deep blacks. In her most recent work, Ariane culls images from her own oeuvre and re-engages with them through the colorful application of paint.

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Anja Marais is a South African visual artist. Through a variety of mediums including photography, sculpture, mixed media collage, assemblage, and film, her work examines themes of displacement and cultural heritage, exploring traces of colonization through the trek of refugees, the pioneer, the pilgrim, and the exiled. Interested in how things deteriorate, morph, and the process of transformation, she oftentimes will repurpose found objects, particularly those that connect to memory, the construction of ritual, and geographical belonging, and the impact of these on the construction of identity.



Anja Marais

Thomas Micchelli is a New York-based artist and writer. His figurative works are composed from memory or imagination rather than from actual observation of a model and employ a sure, sensual line used to delineate mass and form; cropping is used as a compositional tool with heads often running off the page or turning away as if to avoid recognition. The works represent a concern with the dualities that play out in the creative act, the self-conscious and the instinctual, the rational and the irrational.

Natalya Nesterova (1944 - 2022) was a Russian figurative artist and left wing member of Artists' Union of the USSR throughout the 1970s. Harkening back to the aesthetics of folk art, Nesterova's primitive style of painting reinterpreted the socialist-realist canon with heroic scenes of labor and idyllic scenes of leisure transformed into fantastical compositions.

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Letty Nowak is a Key West-based artist known for unusually large portraits (5' x 6'), which are always frontal, and richly colorful. At times her style seems to verge on realism. Her images are both bold and striking, and the eyes of her subjects are unique in the way they behold the onlooker with a certain acceptance and benevolence.

Victor Pesce (1938-2010) was an American artist best known for his minimalist still-life oil paintings. These works feature novel color relationships and spatial experiments in tightly organized compositions that propose a subtle merger of quasi-Cubist spaces and a unique form of metaphysical painting.

Lucio Pozzi is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice defies categorization. Although he had some early associations with conceptual and minimalist artists, he strongly resists being labeled by a singular style. In his work, Pozzi explores a variety of aesthetic approaches, ranging from monochromatic abstract constructions to elaborate figurative paintings in search of absolute sensibility.

Rick Prol is a New York-based artist who first entered the city's artistic milieu at the very end of the 1970s, set against the Lower East Side's urban landscape. He quickly became an icon of the era, known for his dark yet vibrant, cartoonish depictions of fantastical murder and mayhem. Prol's paintings incorporate various styles including Art Brut and Expressionism, laced with various art historical references and laden with sincere depictions of the urban human condition.



Rick Prol

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Ted Rosenthal is a California-based sculptor associated with the highly variegated East Village milieu of the 1980s. An early originator of 3-D graffiti, Rosenthal is known for his painted metal sculptures of flying sharks, exploding briefcases and penises, bolted to signposts throughout the streets and empty lots of Downtown Manhattan.

Abbey Rosko is a Pennsylvania-based painter whose works imbue uncanny familiarity to subjects found on and off stage. She distills photographs of performers into small, moody, realistically rendered scenes that appear dreamy with an underlying sense of unease.

Gary Schneider is a South African-born American artist whose early work in painting, performance, and film remain integral to his explorations of portraiture. He strives to marry art and science, identity and obscurity, figuration and abstraction, the carnal and the spiritual. His "Heads" were begun in 1988 and the series continues.

The person is lying under the camera in the dark. Schneider explores their face, over a long period of time, accumulating details. There is an exchange between author and subject that is traced by the camera in real time and fixed in the film emulsion.

Pamela Sneed is an American poet, visual and performance artist, actress, activist, and teacher. Her book, *Funeral Diva*, is a memoir in poetry and prose about growing up during the AIDS crisis, and the winner of the 2021 Lambda Literary Award for lesbian poetry. Sneed's work often features portraits of people she holds in great esteem whose lives were lost or cruelly taken, coupled with descriptive phrases, narrative excerpts, or poems. Her work carves out space for love and grief outside of time, while also demanding our action and accountability in the now.

Anthony Viti is an American visual artist and educator based in Brooklyn, NY. Viti's art practice has focused on narratives of body, HIV, and resulting sexual subcultures. He uses a variety of media — painting, sculpture, video, and installation— to create works that are simultaneously confrontational and high-spirited.

David Wojnarowicz (1954 - 1992) was among the most incisive and prolific American artists with a body of work spanning painting, photography, writing, film, performance art, and activism. A member of the first wave of East Village artists, Wojnarowicz's work gained prominence during the 1980s, helping to elevate avant-garde street art into the Downtown Milieu. Inspired by outsider experiences drawn from his personal history, he developed an uncanny ability to find beauty in the grit of street life and continually returned to the personal voices of individuals stigmatized by society. Wojnarowicz died

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of AIDS-related illness in 1992, at the age of 37. Today his writing is viewed as an important parallel to his visual art.

Rey Zorro is a Brazilian-born multimedia conceptual artist and co-founder of the legendary 1990's rave emporium Liquid Sky in SoHo. Her work combines traditional art making materials with contemporary Pop imagery, using paint, canvas, wallpaper, industrial and DIY materials as well as photography, collage, and digital processing to make works of visual complexity, densely layered and referencing both our contemporary world and the history of western classical art. Rey was an award-winning artist at the 2019 Florence Biennial with the film 'Us'.

## ABOUT HAL BROMM

Since its establishment in 1976, Hal Bromm Gallery has organized historically significant exhibitions in New York City, presenting and championing the early work of many contemporary artists including Alice Adams, Rosemarie Castoro, Paula Icaro, Dan Graham, Robert Longo, Richard Nonas, Jody Pinto, Lucio Pozzi, Julian Opie, David Salle, Jeff Wall, and Krzysztof Wodiczko. In 1981, the gallery opened Keith Haring's first major solo exhibition and, throughout the 1980s, presented groundbreaking shows by other East Village artists such as Mike Bidlo, David Wojnarowicz, Luis Frangella, Kiki Smith, Martin Wong, and Judy Glantzman, highlighting the energy and depth of talent surfacing in Downtown Manhattan at the time.

For nearly five decades, Hal Bromm has remained committed to its rich history of collaborating with artists, galleries, museums and institutions on the development and curation of avant-garde exhibitions that provide meaningful context around storied moments in contemporary art.

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