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MAIJA PEEPLES-BRIGHT
September 13 – October 31, 2020

Parker Gallery is proud to present its first solo exhibition with legendary Funk and Nut artist Maija Peeples-Bright. The works on view range from 1964 to 2020, surveying over fifty-five years of highly inventive paintings, sculptures and works on paper that take the animal kingdom as its primary subject. The exhibition is accompanied by the artist's first comprehensive monograph, featuring nearly two hundred color illustrations and newly commissioned essays by Cat Kron and Michael Duncan.

Known for her vivacious compositions bustling with animals of all kinds, Peeples-Bright's richly detailed works epitomize horror vacui, filled to the brim with tessellations of "beasties" forming surreal landscapes and interiors in striking impasto. Following a fortuitous art course taught by the influential artist William T. Wiley at UC Davis in 1963, Peeples-Bright switched her major from mathematics to art, dedicating her life to creative pursuits from that moment on. She graduated with a masters degree in 1965 and moved into a rambling Victorian on Steiner Street in San Francisco with her husband at the time, poet David Zack. With friends and passers-by, she painted the house's elaborate facade using every color of Dutch Boy house paint. Dubbed the Rainbow House for its eccentric exterior, it became an important gathering place for Bay Area artists including Wiley, Joan Brown, Roy De Forest, Bruce Conner, and Manuel Neri. The Rainbow House was even a shortly-lived San Francisco outpost of Adeliza McHugh's Candy Store Gallery in Folsom, California.

The earliest work on view—*Untitled (Nude Model at UC Davis)* (1964)—is a rare portrait of a seated nude. Featuring bold gestural marks, the subject sits in a classic pose reminiscent of Auguste Rodin's *The Thinker*. Nearly every other work in the artist's oeuvre features some variety of animal including but not limited to: dogs, flamingos, camels, bats, rhinos, ponies, penguins and pandas, all lovingly referred to by the artist as "beasties." In *Woof's Eternal Flamingo Flames* (1977), the artist's long-haired cocker-dachshund is set against a background of flamingoes, the latter's lanky physique drawing the eye upwards. In *Jaguar Jasper with Jacana Jockeys and Jasmine* (1988), the titular species is repeated throughout the composition in complex striations.

The artist approaches her ceramic sculptures with the same level of ingenuity. Often creating animal hybrids, they employ wordplay and puns, flecked with elements of the absurd. Take *Corgi-Pede* (2005): an extra long hound with four additional sets of legs, or *Dog Dolphin* (2004), which fuses a mammal of the land

with one of the sea. Throughout her work, the artist has maintained a highly individual and sincere approach to her subjects, shaping her magical visions into playful, raucous compositions.

Maija Peeples-Bright (b. 1942 in Riga, Latvia) lives and works in Rocklin, CA. Recent solo exhibitions include those held at Nicelle Beauchene, New York (2019); Guerrero Gallery, San Francisco, CA (2018); b. sakata garo, Sacramento, CA (2017); Transmission Gallery, Oakland, CA (2016); and the Marin Museum of Contemporary Art, Novato, CA (2014). Her work has been included in numerous group exhibitions, including *Strange*, Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, CA (2019); *Landscape Without Boundaries: Selections from the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art*, curated by Dan Nadel, Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, Davis, CA (2019); *Go Away Road*, organized by Adrienne Rubenstein, Loyal, Stockholm, Sweden (2019); and *The Candy Store*, Parker Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2018). Her work is included in many public collections, including the Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada; Cincinnati Art Museum, Cincinnati, OH; Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, CA; Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, Davis, CA; Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN; and Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, CA, among others.