



Eight Body Chorus (detail), 2021, yarns, wire, metal, acrylic polymer, paper-mache, plaster, beeswax, and dried mushrooms, 144 x 166 x 54 inches

## **Michelle Segre**

### *Night Chorus*

April 28 – May 28, 2022

**Opening reception: Thursday, April 28, 6–8pm**

Derek Eller Gallery is pleased to present a solo show of new work by Michelle Segre entitled *Night Chorus*. Featuring three monumental sculptures comprised of wire, yarn, canvas, acrylic, and an array of organic materials, this exhibition finds inspiration in stargazing, science fiction, and the invisible networks of communication between plants and fungi.

Executed over a two-year period in both the Bronx and rural Massachusetts, the sinewy, vibrant sculptures achieve vastness and scale with minimal means. Elliptical loops of wire are the main armature on which Segre creates an eye-like center for each work, methodically stretching and weaving the yarn to voluminous proportions from the center outward. The results are a kind of interplanetary trio of celestial bodies that pulse and radiate into the space around them. The night skies of western Mass were a strong influence on the direction of these works. “There was one night in particular where I lay in the field below a completely clear sky and witnessed a spectacular star display that felt like a visitation of some kind,” writes Segre. “This experience and the whole lead-up from the pandemic confinement in New York is distilled into *Eight Body Chorus*...the piece is like a message from space arriving during a time of what still feels like a

societal and planetary collapse.” The work’s title references the science fiction novel *The Three-Body Problem* by Cixin Liu, in which earthlings communicate with aliens via a radio transmitter.

Peter Wohlleben’s non-fiction book *The Hidden Life of Trees*, which posits a forest community in which trees share information through an underground network of roots, contributes to the iconography embedded within Segre’s sculptures. Dried mushrooms suspended within *Eight Body Chorus*’ central perimeter evoke mycelium, the root-like fungal formations interspersed throughout the trees’ network. At the same time, Segre’s epic work, *I Talk to the Trees*, features a yellow sunburst framed within an intricate weaving of wood grain patterns. The piece stretches beyond its borders, moving from floor to walls to ceiling, suggesting its inextricable connection to an infinite forest or galaxy. Lastly, the wall work *Red Sun* is like a looming phantom with outstretched wings, a roving ball of heat. This piece is one of several works of Segre’s that will be featured in the upcoming motion picture, *Showing Up*, directed by acclaimed filmmaker Kelly Reichardt.

Michelle Segre (b. 1965) has had solo exhibitions at venues such as the lumber room, Portland, OR; Cress Gallery of the University of Tennessee in Chattanooga; and University Art Museum at the University at Albany, SUNY. Her work is currently featured in *The New England Triennial 2022* at deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum and has been included in group exhibitions at the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art in Overland Park, Kansas; the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, CT; and MoMA P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center in Long Island City, among others. She has been honored with a Colene Brown Art Prize, a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, a Civitella Ranieri Foundation Fellowship, the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award, a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Biennial Award. In 2019, Segre’s work was included in the publication *100 Sculptors of Tomorrow*, by Kurt Beers, published by Thames and Hudson, London. This will be Segre’s eighth solo exhibition at the gallery.

Derek Eller Gallery is located at 300 Broome Street between Eldridge Street and Forsyth Street. Hours are Tuesday - Saturday 11am to 6pm, and by appointment. For further information please contact the gallery at 212.206.6411 or visit [www.derekeller.com](http://www.derekeller.com).