

ESSEX FLOWERS

In the Back Space

19 Monroe St
New York, NY 10002



Sara Murphy, *Increased Refusal 2*, oil on panel, 18 x 24 inches, 2020

Sara Murphy

INCREASED REFUSAL

September 3 - October 2, 2022

Opening Reception: Friday, September 2, 6-8pm

Essex Flowers is pleased to present *Increased Refusal*, a group of paintings by Sara Murphy. All share the show's title and were made between 2020 and 2022. A singular pair of crossed arms (or legs), in a pose of resolve. The first of this series (not shown here) came about in 2018 during a difficult transition in the artist's life. The gesture arose out of an urgent desire to embody a posture of strength. In the years since, this position has become more integrated in an increasingly less hospitable world. So, the gesture is reiterated, mimicked in the larger limbs, and exaggerated. Increased refusal. Greater; augmented; expanded, unwillingness to accept; unmitigated denial; firm 'no'. Limbs precisely positioned, as if on a decorated mantle. Arms as armor. Transparent paint and overlaid wooden supports contain one another. Limbs and supports are folded as much as crossed, refusing even to locate their refusal too literally.

These works belong to the artist's performative practice of tracing her body in varying poses. She regards this process as observational drawing; one that favors the sense of touch rather than sight. The resulting works can take painting or sculpture as their form. Shifting between registers of size and scale, naming and enacting, describing and building; they explore how we perceive our bodies in relation to our sur-

Gallery hours: Saturdays and Sundays from 12-6 PM and by appointment

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roundings and how we reconcile images to our physicality. She has an ongoing concern with medium specificity, directed toward cultivating authentic perceptual attention. Here, Murphy's explicit use of body language points a way toward embodied perception - but makes it social.

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Sara Murphy (b. 1983) holds a BFA from Memphis College of Art, an MFA from Hunter College and a Certificate in Art Conservation from SACI, Florence. She was a 2016 recipient of the Rema Hort Mann Emerging Artist's Grant. Her work has been featured in solo exhibitions at Essex Flowers and Cleopatra's Gallery, and in group exhibitions at Rachel Uffner Gallery, The Journal Gallery, and Halsey McKay, among others. She lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.