

ALTMAN SIEGEL

1150 25TH ST. SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107

tel: 415.576.9300 / fax: 415.373.4471

www.altmansiegel.com



Beth Van Hoesen
Punks and Sisters
January 17 – February 25, 2023

In collaboration with the Rainbow Honor Walk and the artist's Estate, Altman Siegel is delighted to present an exhibition of the portraiture of San Francisco legend, Beth Van Hoesen (1926–2010).

A keen observer of detail, Van Hoesen's prints and works on paper express a mastery of line that captures the unique eccentricities of her subjects and the vibrant Castro community in which she lived for nearly 50 years. This exhibition focuses on her portraits of punks from the late 1980s and early '90s, and a series of portraits commemorating The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, an order of queer and trans nuns. Started in the late '70s, the Sisters are known for their activism, community service, ministry and outreach to those on the edges. All sales of the Sisters portraits benefit the Rainbow Honor Walk, the nonprofit organization that sponsors a monument of bronze sidewalk plaques in the Castro honoring lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer individuals who have made a significant impact in global history.

From her perch above the Castro, in a retrofitted firehouse that was her home and studio, Beth Van Hoesen hosted a drawing circle that regularly included her husband, Mark Adams, Theophilus Brown, Gordon Cook, Wayne Thiebaud, and Paul Wonner with other San Francisco notables including Robert Bechtle and Joan Brown occasionally sitting in. Committed to the practice of working from a live model, the artists hired a shared model and met weekly over the course of many decades. The ritual included drawing for several hours with a break for lunch and martinis before returning to the studio. While their names are well known today, this circle of isolated iconoclasts worked outside of the painting schools of Abstract Expressionism and Color Field that were all the rage when they came on the scene.

Characterized by an emotional reserve that recalls scientific observation, Van Hoesen's portraits nonetheless bring out the beauty and eccentricities of her varied subjects. Born in Boise, Idaho, in 1926, she studied painting at Stanford University and traveled to Mexico and Europe to study and frequent museums. She then enrolled at California School of Fine Arts (now the recently closed San Francisco Art Institute) to study under David Park and Clifford Still. Her interest in painting faded during the '50s when she found her voice as a printmaker, reveling in the nuance and soft fine line of the intaglio print.

ALTMAN SIEGEL

1150 25TH ST. SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107

tel: 415.576.9300 / fax: 415.373.4471

www.altmansiegel.com

Though steadfastly committed to the practice of drawing from a live model, Van Hoesen was primarily known for her masterful work as a fastidious printmaker. She considered her drawings as merely a means to that end, and did not exhibit them until later in life when she became intrigued by the punk culture taking hold in her San Francisco neighborhood in the 1980s. Often sourcing her models from the colorful characters animating the Castro neighborhood in which she lived, Van Hoesen's drawings serve as a kind of ad hoc record of the vibrant community that remains one of the most prominent symbols of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer activism in the world.

Beth Van Hoesen has had solo exhibitions at numerous institutions including the Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts; Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; The Oakland Museum of California; Contemporary Graphics Center of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, California; and the Portland Art Museum, Oregon. She has participated in many group exhibitions nationally and internationally. Her work is included in many private and public collections including Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA; Amon Carter Museum of American Art, Fort Worth, TX; Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL; Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, MD; Brooklyn Art Museum, Brooklyn, NY; Honolulu Museum of Art, Honolulu, HI; the Huntington, San Marino, CA; Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts, Stanford University, Stanford, CA; Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Mills College, Oakland, CA; Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, MN; Morgan Library and Museum, New York, NY; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Oakland Museum of California, Oakland, CA; Portland Art Museum, Portland, OR; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA; San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, CA; and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

For more information please contact info@altmansiegel.com or 415-576-9300.