

Blum & Poe is pleased to announce its first one-person exhibition of new paintings by Carroll Dunham.

For nearly thirty years, Carroll Dunham has eschewed the conventions of abstract and figurative painting, instead choosing to work within their margins. It is in the space between the two where Dunham has established a trademark style and vast body of work that is both deeply original and enormously influential.

An indelible coolness marks each of Dunham's paintings – driven largely by his loose playful line, vibrant color palette and the inherent peculiarity of his characters. Branded with human-like mouths, hair, teeth and penis-noses (but never eyes), these creatures have evolved from forms resembling multi-colored cellular membranes, to recently, more or less fully resolved male and female nudes. Often outfitted with knives or guns, these creatures have fought, shot and stabbed their way through uncertain terrain and imaginary floating planets. In 2006, Dunham began work on his "Mule" paintings (fedora wearing, gun-toting male figures, nude from the waist down and viewed from the rear). Concurrently, he also began painting richly textured trees, often alone, yet activated with the suggestion of an uprooting or impending fall; defined by his signature line and deliberate paint application.

In the selection of paintings on view at Blum & Poe, Dunham has merged these two dominant yet distinctly different forms: the faceless, fleshy, pink and white nude with the lone and luscious tree. Their surrounding terrain ranges from arid and sparse to sun drenched and crystalline. Viewed again from behind, underneath or occasionally on top of the figure, Dunham grants us unrestricted access into every curve, crack and orifice of the body, ultimately drawing undeniable formal connections between the female nude and her natural surroundings – mining rich art historical territory in a way that is unmistakably his own. It is in these private spaces: between the legs, under the arms, or over the head, where we begin to distinguish a subtly shifting foreground and background and the paintings reach a fully harmonious equilibrium.

Carroll Dunham was born in New Haven, CT in 1949 and currently lives and works in New York and Connecticut. He has been the subject of numerous one-person exhibitions, including a mid-career retrospective at the New Museum, New York (2002-03) and an exhibition of paintings and sculptures since 2004 at Millesgarden in Stockholm. His work has been included in several Whitney Biennials and is in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art, NY, Art Institute of Chicago, IL, Philadelphia Museum of Art, PA, Tate Gallery, London, Whitney Museum of American

Art, NY, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, and Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago amongst others.

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