

Mendes Wood DM is pleased to announce *Mira Schor: Visions and Materialities*.

US-based painter and art theorist Mira Schor's first solo exhibition in Brussels represents an overdue European encounter with the artist's singular practice, tracing several decades of an approach that insists on exchanges between matter and language. Schor has long positioned painting as an abounding space to challenge prejudicial norms, where image and text refuse to remain distinct categories, where "language as image" takes the fore. Her surfaces function as porous grounds rich in complexities of lived, embodied thought, narratives women hold yet are not always permitted to declare as equal knowledges. The resulting terrain proposes a place where forms and words intersect on terms that are neither cursorily visual nor unequivocally visceral or purely conceptual.

Schor's artistic path was shaped by her studies in the CalArts Feminist Art Program, run by Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro, and her participation in the interrelated, seminal Womanhouse collective, performance space, and installation in the early 1970s – radical contexts that reframed artistic language through the lens of lived experience. In gouache works such as *Shoe* (1972) Schor reflects on the history of fashion and women's daily lives, while *Mask with Flower* (1977) deploys delicate materials like rice paper as medium and metaphor. Fragile, inscribed surfaces evoke notions of presence and absence, corporeality as a trace – part image, part text – where material vulnerability mirrors the human body's complex relation to transparency, strength, and fragility. These foundational pieces challenge assumptions about the interiority of women's lives, making visible capacities for reflection and transformation.

As her practice reshaped itself through the 1980s, Schor employed methods like stenciling and repetition, producing works in which elemental shapes hover between figuration and abstraction. Works from this period, such as *Figure in the Woods* (1981 – 82) take on new ambitions, interacting, for example, with an enduring tradition of American mystical landscape painting (Martin Johnson Heade in the 19th century to Marsden Hartley, Arthur Dove, and Georgia O'Keefe). In the same decade, verticality entered as important point of reflection in Schor's multi-paneled compositions, inspired, for example, by the experience and memory of seeing Chartres Cathedral in France as a child. Through such explorations, it becomes apparent that Schor's language emerges through interplay of painted rhythms – as if the surface were orchestrating a visual lexicon drawn from daily life, organic forms, and cultural memory – as much as through textuality. But even while broadening her vocabulary of signs, Schor imparts a feeling that she is constantly considering the painting's surface as a page, a score, or a manuscript – one that lent itself to the complexity of thought, depicting both femininity and masculinity, encoded in female voices.

Recent works such as *Whose Body?* (2022) and the *Trauma* series further extend this inquiry through tensions between personal narrative, power relations, and collective discourse. Like Schor's earlier works, these pieces claim a material space for language, insisting that women's stories, ideas, voices are substantive rather than peripheral utterances while expanding into a wide reach of politically resistant, ecologically critical, and experiential contexts. Celebrating a pertinacious decades-long practice, the exhibition underscores the way Schor's surfaces, images, and texts continuously speak to one another and open painting to forms and discourses that have, intentionally or otherwise, often fallen outside of its frame.