

Susanne Vielmetter Los Angeles Projects is pleased to announce our first exhibition with celebrated conceptual artist Mary Kelly. Opening on April 23, 2016, CIRCA TRILOGY presents a newly completed project that addresses the meaning of an historical era shaped by the events of 1968.

The Trilogy includes three large works in compressed lint: Circa 1968 (2004), Circa 1940 (2015), and Circa 2011 (2016). In each work, Kelly appropriates and reinterprets an iconic archival image through the lens of generational memory. The images that Kelly has selected are synecdochical; while they represent certain moments of The Blitz, the student uprisings of 68, and the Arab Spring, they encapsulate the wider historical narratives of these major events both in their ubiquity and the way their specific aesthetics communicate the image environment of the time. In the installation, light noise is projected onto the lint, creating an uncanny resemblance to black and white film of the forties, grainy video of the sixties, or the glare of a contemporary computer screen. Kelly's concept of history as a lived relation to the past is concerned with materializing affect as much as fact, and her working process is intensely durational. Individual units of compressed lint are cast in the filter screen of a domestic dryer over several months and hundreds of washing cycles; then assembled as large panels of low relief. Each work also is paired with a letterpress print, consisting of a diagram and text by the artist, that composes a "tour" of the lint image, and provides a score for a performance by the artist collective My Barbarian and cellist Betsy Rettig during the exhibition opening.

Circa 1940 is based on an iconic photograph of London during the Blitz. Three men, reading books in the ruins of the Holland House Library, are posed to suggest a moment of transcendence amid the chaos. Kelly describes this moment, not long before she was born, as the political primal scene for her generation, underpinning the anti-war protests of the 1960s. Circa 1968 adopts Jean Pierre Rey's famous picture of Paris, in May, just before the general strike. In a direct reference to Delacroix's "Liberty Guiding the People," a young woman hoists a flag, held aloft by a male companion. She appears trapped by the role she tries to portray, yet sets a precedent for the legal and personal empowerment of women through the feminist movement of the early 1970's. Around this time, many of the women involved in that movement had children, and it was their curiosity about 1968, as young adults, that Kelly says motivated her to undertake this project. Circa 2011 draws on the abundant, but often anonymous, images of the encampment in Tahrir Square during the Arab Spring. Before the military takeover, at the highpoint of the revolution, when aspirations to form a secular and democratic government still seemed possible to achieve, these images brought back memories of 1968, but events proved otherwise. This final work is far more abstract than the previous two, reflecting not only the difference of the past and opacity of the present, but also an aesthetic shift from the carefully curated, posed pictures that shape our recollection of 20th century

events to the vast networks of images from cellular phones that combine in our memories to describe current circumstances.

In addition to the Circa Trilogy, Kelly presents a series of smaller lint works that reference the covers of 7 Days, a shortlived weekly newspaper founded by an alliance of women engaged in feminist politics and men in the self-styled 'revolutionary left.' They aimed to establish parity in the production process and give full support to the Women's Liberation Movement. Launched in October 1971, 7 Days ran until May 1972, and during that time, Kelly contributed articles and illustrations to several issues. These images and headlines present a far more specific and mundane chronicle of the events that defined the early years of women's liberation in contrast to the archetypal images presented in the larger works.

Production of the works in CIRCA TRILOGY was supported by a 2015 John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship. Mary Kelly (b. 1941) is one of the most influential American conceptual artists. She has had significant solo exhibitions at the Whitworth Gallery, Manchester, UK; the Santa Monica Museum, Santa Monica, CA; the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY; the Generali Foundation, Vienna, Austria; the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Sweden; the Center for Contemporary Art, Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw, Poland; and the Institute for Contemporary Art, London, UK. Recent noteworthy group exhibitions include "Take It or Leave It: Institution, Image Ideology," Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA; "Women and Work," Tate Britain, London, UK; "Ends of the Earth: Land Art to 1974," Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; "This Will Have Been: Art, Love and Politics in the 1980's," Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL; "Wack! Art and the Feminist Revolution," Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; and "Documenta 12," Kassel, Germany.

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