

FIERMAN is pleased to present its inaugural exhibition, a solo show of the drawings of Kathe Burkhart. Though Burkhart's work as a conceptual artist is interdisciplinary, she is largely known for her decades long *Liz Taylor Series*, paintings and drawings of the star at her most gorgeous and grotesque in which her image stands as a cipher for upending hierarchies and gender nonconformity.

Taylor serves in Burkhart's work as a key into a wry investigation into sexual politics and the liberating potential of excess. Taylor's filmic image, immediately recognizable from Avedon portraits, film stills, Warhol paintings, and tabloid covers, is for Burkhart a visual readymade, often adulterated by lewd text. Throughout the *Liz Taylor Series*, the star stands in for the artist, confounding confessional autobiographical immediacy with inescapable cultural mediation.

The work in the exhibition focuses on the red drawings in which Taylor ranges from her most sexually piquant in *Desire* to her most zaftig and defiant in *Go Fuck Yourself*. These works are all done in marker, sometimes with pencil, on red vellum, similar in feel to her large-scale paintings. The red becomes ground as well as figure, with Taylor's image vacillating between surface and subject.

In *Through the Wringer*, a larger scale drawing incorporating alongside it a copy of Judy Chicago's book *Through the Flower*, Burkhart drops Taylor as a guise and instead places herself at the nexus of tangled threads of politics and personhood. The drawing is in pencil, creating an intimacy aggressively absent in the Liz drawings. Appropriating Chicago's book cover and subtitle "my struggle as a woman artist", the image of Chicago's work is replaced with an image sourced from an Excedrin ad. Like her project as a whole, it both reveals and conceals the instability of selfhood.

Kathe Burkhart is an artist and writer who had her first solo show in New York in 1988 and since has consistently exhibited nationally and internationally. In 2016 she was the subject of a retrospective exhibition at Kunsthalle Fri-Art, Fribourg, Switzerland. She has published four books of fiction, and her work is included in the public collections of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; the SMAK Museum, Ghent; and the Art Institute of Chicago, among others. Burkhart's work will also be shown this fall in *SMS SOS: Text, Texture Gesture*, Marlborough Chelsea, NY (opening September 8); Art Votes, Gallery Bergen, Bergen College, NJ (opening September 20); and *Mean Machine (Up Jumped the Devil)* curated by Bill Cournoyer, The Meeting, NY, by appointment only.

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