

# VENUS

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## CUNT

Judith Bernstein, VALIE EXPORT, Dorothy Iannone, Marilyn Minter, Carolee Schneemann, Betty Tompkins

July 15 – September 2, 2017

Opening: July 15, 4:00 – 7:00 pm

## VENUS

601 South Anderson Street

Los Angeles, CA 90023

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** VENUS PRESENTS CUNT, MAJOR EXHIBITION FEATURING SEMINAL WORK BY JUDITH BERNSTEIN, VALIE EXPORT, DOROTHY IANNONE, CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN, AND BETTY TOMPKINS



(Los Angeles, CA) – Beginning July 15th, 2017, VENUS is pleased to present CUNT, an exhibition featuring work by Judith Bernstein, VALIE EXPORT, Dorothy Iannone, Marilyn Minter, Carolee Schneemann, and Betty Tompkins. Comprised of important and historical works from each artist’s career, as well as new works produced expressly for the exhibition, the show will be on view through September 2nd, 2017.

On view in the gallery is an expansive selection of work in diverse media by six artists who unapologetically create representations of female sexuality. Bound by a dedication to alter the ways in which women’s bodies are represented in both fine art and media, these artists worked independently of one another to create images that unabashedly portray the vagina as a locus of power. The exhibition features works produced between 1964 and the present, in order to situate these artists’ practices as in part a reaction against the misogyny present in the art world in the 1960s and 1970s, as well as to celebrate the fortitude and dogged artistic activism that these artists have shared for nearly five decades.

The history of women in art has been, in large part, the history of women as subject or as muse. The artists included in CUNT make work that runs counter to this dominant history, asserting instead that women can be both image and image-maker. The exhibition argues that methods of representation have an impact upon the interpretation of bodies and histories, in a way that can challenge governing understandings of female sexuality. Each artist in the exhibition contributes work that employs imagery of the body, of copulation, or of masturbation, that underscores these conversations, but none of the images elevate, romanticize, or subdue their subject matter for the comfort of the viewer. Instead, these works enlarge, repeat, and glorify images of women and vaginas in order to demand that the viewer respond to the work with an understanding of women as both subject and maker. Taken together, the show assembles work by a group of artists who have made it their life’s work to champion both the centrality and importance of female perspectives in creative production.

## ABOUT JUDITH BERNSTEIN

Judith Bernstein (b. 1942, Newark, NJ) lives and works in New York City. She received her BFA from Yale University, and her MFA from the Yale University School of Art in 1967, and her painting practice has been marked by an engagement with sexual and political activism. Bernstein was a founding member of A.I.R. Gallery, the first gallery in the United States to be cooperatively owned and operated by women, and has been involved with the Guerilla Girls, a group of radical feminist artists dedicated to fighting sexism and racism in the art world, since the group’s founding in 1985. For CUNT, Bernstein has conceived a brand new 180-foot long mural for the gallery’s exterior wall, which renders one of her iconic black and white screws that suggests a violently mechanized phallus. In addition to the mural, Bernstein will exhibit a new series of sexualized protest paintings in the gallery, all rendered in day-glow paint, as well as a pair of her vertical screw paintings. With the day-glow paintings, Bernstein continues to develop a system of images she established in her *CUNTFACE* paintings, rendering enormous, predatory vaginas complete with sharp, gnashing teeth. Bernstein’s work is held in the collections of numerous public institutions around the world, including the DESTE Foundation for Contemporary Art, Athens; the Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Jewish

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Museum, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; the Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase; the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich; and the Alex Katz Foundation, New York.

## ABOUT VALIE EXPORT

VALIE EXPORT (b. 1940, Linz, Austria, as Waltraud Lehner) lives and works in Vienna. In 1967, the artist changed her name to VALIE EXPORT, shedding the names of both her father and husband, in favor of the name of her favorite brand of cigarettes. Her oeuvre includes work in nearly all media, including video, photography, performance, installation, writing, and publishing, and her production has long been marked by a desire to explore culturally coded taboos related to women as sexualized objects. EXPORT quickly gained notoriety for her guerilla performances, in which she used her body as material. In one of her most discussed early performances, *Touch Cinema* (1968), EXPORT wore a shrunken box, or “movie theater,” around her naked upper body, and between 1968 and 1971, EXPORT invited strangers in ten European cities to touch her through the curtains affixed to the front of the box. Video documentation of *Touch Cinema* will be on view in the exhibition, as well as a video work titled *Mann & Frau & Animal* (1970-1973). EXPORT’s work is held in the collections of numerous public institutions around the world, including the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels; the Institute of Contemporary Art, London; the Tate Modern, London; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; MoMA P.S.1., New York; the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; the Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai; the Generali Foundation, Vienna; and MUMoK, Vienna.

## ABOUT DOROTHY IANNONE

Dorothy Iannone (b. 1933, Boston, MA) lives and works in Berlin, Germany. Iannone began painting in the mid-1950s, with no formal training, and developed an instantly recognizable style that pulled on a set of visual strategies gathered during periods of extensive travel. Her work has always addressed corporality and the human figure, and her flattened forms variously recall Japanese woodcuts, Greek urns, Egyptian hieroglyphics, and Byzantine Mosaics. Iannone’s practice is deliberately multidisciplinary, and her narrative works often unfold across paintings, works on paper, artists’ books, sculptures, and films. On view in the gallery is a set of early and important works by Iannone, including *I Was Thinking Of You III* (1975/2006), which consists of a large, hand-painted box, in which a monitor plays a recording of Iannone’s face taken while she masturbated. *L’Adorable Trixie* (1975-1978), is a major example of Iannone’s hand-drawn, collage based style, assembled from various pieces of paper and swathes of paint and mounted on board. Presented on a series of tables through the gallery, Iannone’s work from 1968, *Lists IV: A Much More Detailed Than Requested Reconstruction*, is a narrative sequence of 34 black and white drawings, which highlight the artist’s folkloric interest in coitus and the female form. Iannone’s work is held in the collections of numerous public institutions around the world, including the Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, France; the Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Austria; and the Living Art Museum, Iceland.

## ABOUT MARILYN MINTER

Marilyn Minter (b. 1948, Shreveport, LA) lives and works in New York City. Minter’s work is concerned with representations of female sexuality, specifically as they relate to issues of contemporary feminism and sexual politics. Since the 1980s, Minter has doggedly rendered shocking images that call attention to the violent aspects of pornography, misogyny, and mass media present in American culture. Minter’s earliest work on view in the gallery is a painting on metal from 1992, which features a woman with her legs raised, closely cropped to depict her vagina tightly covered with a pair of white cotton panties. Also on view are two large format enamel paintings on metal, both of which feature close-up depictions of vaginas, partially obscured behind foggy panes of glass. Minter continues this steamy imagery in a dye-sublimation print and a series of large format c-prints, which variously depict manicured hands grazing vaginas, lengthy pubic hair, and glowing skin. Minter has also included a photographic portrait of Miley Cyrus portrayed in a similar style, printed in an edition of fifty, the profits from which will be donate entirely to Planned Parenthood. Minter’s work is held in the collections of numerous public institutions around the world, including the Denver Art Museum, Denver; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Museum of Modern Art,

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New York; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum of Art, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; and the Moderna Museet, Stockholm. In 2015, a major retrospective of Minter's work opened at the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, before traveling to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, the Orange County Museum of Art, Newport, and the Brooklyn Museum, New York.

## ABOUT CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN

Carolee Schneemann (b. 1939, Philadelphia, PA) lives and works in upstate New York. Schneemann's work was among the earliest to investigate the relationship between the politics and erotics of gender. Her practice has been hailed for the way in which Schneemann uses her body as material to create videos, performances, and situations to address the politics of the body. On view in this exhibition is a video called *Fuses*, from 1966, which depicts Schneemann and her then-boyfriend James Tenney having sex. The film is notable for the way in which Schneemann reworked the very material of the film by drawing, painting, burning, and staining the celluloid to blend the genres of performance, painting, and video art. Alongside the video work, Schneemann will also display a gelatin silver print and a work on paper that were produced in conjunction with the video. From a more recent series of work, Schneemann will display a work on paper related to her performance *Ask the Goddess*, which draws comparisons between contemporary female sexuality and deities from ancient cultures. Schneemann's work is held in the collections of numerous public institutions around the world, including the Tate Modern, London; the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. In 2017, Schneemann received the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the 57th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia.

## ABOUT BETTY TOMPKINS

Betty Tompkins (b. 1945, Washington, D.C.) lives and works in New York City. Since the late 1960s, Tompkins's practice has focused almost entirely on photorealistic representations of genitalia and sexual acts. With near absolute precision, Tompkins variously renders vaginas and penises on large format canvases, as well as close-up depictions of both heterosexual and homosexual intercourse. Her earliest work was produced using images from vintage pornography, which she would grid off, scale up, and subsequently render on large canvases with finely a tuned airbrush. On view in the gallery is a selection of early works on paper that bear a certain psychedelic influence in their depictions of breasts, mouths, and penises, as well as two smaller gridded works on paper from Tompkins's *Cow Cunt* series, which portray small cows grazing on women's pubic hair. A grid of her more recent *Pussy Paintings*, each an airbrushed rendering of a different vagina in black and white paint, will hang alongside a large format painting from 2016 entitled *Ersatz Cunt Painting #1*, which depicts a vagina in peachy monochrome in a panoramic format. Tompkins's work is held in the collections of numerous public institutions around the world, including the Brooklyn Museum, New York; the Museum of the City of New York, New York; the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and the Fondation d'Entreprise Frances, Senlis.

## ABOUT VENUS

Founded in 2012 by Adam Lindemann and with spaces in both Manhattan and Los Angeles, VENUS is dedicated to curated exhibitions both historic and contemporary, which cast a unique and often iconoclastic view on the work of established artists or artists whose works have been somewhat overlooked. The gallery continues to collaborate with prominent artists, foundations, estates, and galleries.

For further information about the exhibition and availability, please contact the gallery at [info@venusoverlosangeles.com](mailto:info@venusoverlosangeles.com)

For all press related inquiries related to the exhibition, please email [press@venusovermanhattan.com](mailto:press@venusovermanhattan.com)