

VENUS MANHATTAN

Mr. Unatural and Other Works from the Allan Frumkin Gallery (1952-1987)

February 22 - April 7, 2017

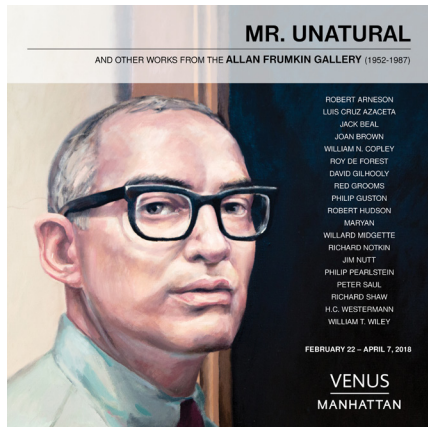
Opening: Thursday, February 22nd, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Venus Over Manhattan

980 Madison Avenue

New York, NY 10075

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



(New York, NY) – **Venus Over Manhattan** is pleased to present ***Mr. Unatural and Other Works from the Allan Frumkin Gallery (1952-1987)***, an exhibition of work dedicated to the history, programming, and legacy of Allan Frumkin’s eponymous galleries in both Chicago and New York. The show, comprised of more than fifty works in diverse media by nineteen artists, will be on view from February 22nd through April 7th, 2018. *Mr. Unatural and Other Works from the Allan Frumkin Gallery (1952-1987)* marks Venus Over Manhattan’s third major presentation of work championed by Allan Frumkin, following the critically acclaimed exhibitions *Peter Saul: From Pop to Punk*, in 2015, and *H.C. Westermann: See America First*, also in 2015.

Allan Frumkin (1927-2002) opened his first gallery in 1952 in Chicago, where he was responsible for giving artists like Joseph Cornell, Matta, and Alberto Burri their first exhibitions in the city, and exhibited works by members of the European and American avant-gardes. As Frumkin introduced Surrealism, German Expressionism, and painters of the New York School to the Midwest, he also developed a program that championed younger artists from Chicago, the San Francisco Bay Area, and New York. Though he continued to mount exhibitions of American and European Masters until he retired in 1995, Frumkin staked his name to three then-nascent artistic movements from the United States, and his gallery became the leading venue for popularizing work associated with the San Francisco Funk movement, the Chicago Imagists, and a particular brand of New York Realism.

In 1959, Frumkin opened a second gallery in New York, located on 57th Street, where he mounted early and important solo exhibitions of artists including Robert Arneson, Joan Brown, Roy De Forest, Peter Saul, H.C. Westermann, William T. Wiley, Robert Hudson, Maryan, Willard Midgettte, and Philip Pearlstein. Frumkin’s taste ran decidedly counter to the prevailing styles of the day, and during the years when painting was declared “dead,” and exhibitions like “Primary Structures” at the Jewish Museum were setting the tone for artistic production in America, Frumkin instead presented exhibitions of observational realist portraits by Philip Pearlstein, humorously cutting ceramics by Robert Arneson, and ecstatically colored and politically incorrect paintings by Peter Saul. Never one to shy away from difficult, offensive, or visually complex work, Frumkin and his galleries existed as a beacon for a group of artists who defied established tastes, many of whom are only now achieving the renown that Frumkin had hoped for them.

On view in the gallery is an expansive selection of over fifty works in nearly all media by nineteen artists, each of whom Frumkin championed in his galleries in Chicago or New York. Assembled almost exclusively from the Estate of Allan Frumkin, the exhibition represents the wide range of styles, mediums, and approaches that Frumkin promoted, as well as the depth Frumkin pursued in the careers of the artists he represented. *Mr. Unatural and Other Works from the Allan Frumkin Gallery (1952-1987)* also functions as a portrait of the maverick gallerist himself, not only through the work he exhibited, but also through the work he collected. As Roberta Smith noted in her obituary for him in *The New York Times*, Frumkin was, “like many dealers...also a collector.” Indeed, his own collection included many of the most important works made by the artists he represented. Throughout the years that Frumkin worked with his stable of artists, he would often pick works from their studios to add to his collection, often times before even giving the piece

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an opportunity to be shown in a public exhibition. But regardless of exhibition histories, Frumkin's efficient collecting style allowed him to assemble many masterworks by the artists he represented, and in this way, Frumkin is often remembered as an even better collector than he was a salesman.

Mr. Unatural and Other Works from the Allan Frumkin Gallery (1952-1987) is loosely organized to reflect the three main groups of artists that Frumkin championed: Funk artists from the San Francisco Bay Area, Realist painters from New York, and artists associated with the development of the Imagist movement in Chicago. The largest group of works on view represents a group of artists based in California, including Robert Arneson, Joan Brown, William T. Wiley, and Roy De Forest, all of whom taught or were associated with the art department at the University of California, Davis. A group of their students, including Richard Shaw, David Gillhooly, and Richard Notkin are also represented, alongside a large selection of work by Peter Saul, who was born in San Francisco, lived for many years in the Bay Area, and many of whose works depict San Francisco. These works are shown in close proximity to a large selection of paintings, sculptures, and works on canvas that were produced or shown in Chicago, in order to suggest the way in which Frumkin's Chicago gallery, where he exhibited work by San Francisco Bay Area artists, as well as the work of H.C. Westermann, came to influence a whole generation of artists in Chicago, including Jim Nutt, who famously worked as an art handler in the Chicago Gallery. The third group is comprised of paintings and works on paper by Philip Pearlstein, Jack Beal, and Willard Midgette, who represent the group of Realist painters from New York that Frumkin supported. Within this loose structure, a group of important works by artists who belonged to none of these groups, but who asserted their importance within the Frumkin program, including William N. Copley, Luis Cruz Azaceta, Maryan, and Philip Guston. This organizational strategy suggests the scope of Frumkin's program, and in many cases, exposes the meaningful dialogues and interactions between the gallery's various constituencies.

ABOUT VENUS OVER MANHATTAN

Founded in 2012 by Adam Lindemann, Venus Over Manhattan 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@venusovermanhattan.com

For all press inquiries related to the exhibition, please email press@venusovermanhattan.com