

Press Release

## CELESTIAL SONGS

Curated by Adrienne Rubenstein

June 20 - July 26, 2024

Opening: Thursday, June 20th, 6:00 - 8:00 PM

55 Great Jones Street

New York, NY 10012



(New York, NY) – **Venus Over Manhattan** is pleased to present ***Celestial Songs***, a group exhibition curated by artist **Adrienne Rubenstein**. Organized in conversation with a simultaneous exhibition of work by Maija Peeples-Bright and Roy De Forest, *Celestial Songs* comprises both historical and contemporary works by artists whose visual and thematic interests recall aspects of the Funk Art movement of the 1960s. The show comprises 25 different artists, and includes drawings, collage, paintings, fiber works, sculptures, and various other mixed media. *Celestial Songs* will be on view at 55 Great Jones street from June 20 to July 26, 2024.

*Celestial Songs* traces a vibrant journey through the enduring legacy of California funk. It details an expansive and autobiographical history rooted in the Bay Area in the 70s, whose influence reverberates back and forth across the country to this day. Funk art was defined as a reaction against the nonobjectivity of abstract expressionism, and instead prioritized free-spirited and humorous creativity. It championed all types of media, with a

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strong presence of ceramic and mixed-media work. Many artists associated with this style in the 70s participated in exhibitions at Adeliza McHugh's Candy Store Gallery, a site of convergence and exchange for the movement. The Candy Store gallery became a home for free-wheeling aesthetics and jubilant irreverence, and created space for like-minded community. The impact and precedent of the Candy Store Gallery rings through the work in Rubenstein's curation.

Emma Soucek, who is based in Berkeley, CA, creates abstract paintings using colorful paper pulp; her work puts a new spin on the immediate geometry within Roy and Maija's works. Nik Gelormino has sculpted two very satisfying heart shaped stools out of Redwood from the California forests. Carlos Villa (1936 - 2013), a beloved professor whom Rubenstein studied with at the Art Institute from 2009-11, is represented with a characteristic mixed-media painting that features a small fragment of bone.

Erika Rane, a New York based abstract painter uses spills and collage to create tangled mazes reminiscent of natural patterns. Meg Lipke's shapes and symbols fade in and out of pastel color fields; and Alice Mackler (1931 - 2024), included with two ceramic sculptures from 2013, brings raw figuration. In a continuum of time, these artists working in different eras can all be said to have influenced one another. The narrative drawn from among their works is both original and deeply integral to the indescribable mysticism of making art.

Featured artists include: Betty Bailey, Taussen Brewer, Joan Brown, Maija Peeples-Bright, Roy De Forest, Faith, Melvino Garreti, Nik Gelormino, Pam Glick, Gretta Johnson, Grant Levy-Lucero, Meg Lipke, Alice Mackler, Dan Mandelbaum, Walter Price, Erika Rane, Margo Newmark Rosenbaum, Adrienne Rubenstein, Peter Saul, Sally Saul, Daisy Mae Sheff, Emma Soucek, Marisa Takal, Carlos Villa, Rachel Eulena Williams.

For additional information, please contact the gallery at [info@venusovermanhattan.com](mailto:info@venusovermanhattan.com)

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39 Great Jones Street  
New York, NY 10012  
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## GALLERY HOURS

Tuesday – Saturday  
10:00 am – 6:00 pm

## IMAGE CREDITS

Carlos Villa  
*Group Grope Dream #1, 1982-86*  
Acrylic, bone, and fabric on canvas stretched over wood; 17 1/4 x 13 3/4 in  
(43.8 x 34.9 cm)

Alice Mackler  
*Untitled, 2013*  
Ceramic

All images courtesy the artist and Venus Over Manhattan, New York