

WILDING CRAN GALLERY



Vanessa Beecroft

Broken Arm

May 18 - June 22, 2024

Wilding Cran Gallery is pleased to present *Broken Arm*, an exhibition of paintings and sculptures by Vanessa Beecroft.

Since her first performance in 1993, Vanessa Beecroft has shaped performance art and influenced modern representations of the female body and socio-political discourses in the contemporary art world. Throughout her career, Beecroft has produced 95 live performances and dozens of international exhibitions at major museums, airports, palazzos and botanical gardens. These performances have centered around the rigorous Rules of Non-Engagement she devised to guide her mostly naked and female performers: *Do Not Talk/Do Not Interact With Anyone/Do Not Whisper/Do Not Smile/Be Natural/Be Detached*. Curator and gallerist Jeffrey Deitch, an early supporter of Beecroft's work, has described her as one of the "very rare artists who come up with a whole new concept of how to make a work of art and expand our sense of what a work of art can be."

WILDING CRAN GALLERY

And yet, “painting and sculpture is what I always wanted to do,” Beecroft recently told me. And so Beecroft returned to her studio in the mid-2010s in between performances and other engagements to resume making the figurative paintings and sculptures she’d abandoned as a central practice at age 23 while still a student at art school.

“At school,” she continued, “I felt my work, the figurative drawings that I was doing, was not avant-garde enough and I felt ashamed. I still feel embarrassed and uneasy about creating things that are so clearly tangible. And yet I always wanted, since the beginning, to create a different world from scratch, out of nothing.”

Centered around her looming and vulnerable nine-foot sculpture *Large Body* (2024), the surrounding paintings and smaller sculptures in the exhibition were selected by Wilding Cran Gallery from dozens of figurative works Beecroft produced between 2013 and the present.

These new figurative works are at once a flight from the famed VB Performance Series, and a bold attempt to depict what remains unseen in the performances... the ghosting of psychological presence in the negative space between limbs and torsos in these stretched, supine bodies.

As she explains, “In some of the earliest paintings and drawings, I tried to paint what you cannot see in the performances. The psyches of the girls, as transmitted to me: representations of myself, as channeled through my unconscious. At one point, I tried to reproduce realistic images from photos of the performances. But then I realized that the truth was somewhere else, between the two. And in these works, I am trying to find it.”

“There isn’t a style yet but the colors are always the same: the same in the drawings, the paintings, and the performances.”

-- Chris Kraus

Image: Vanessa Beecroft, *untitled*, 2018, Oil on canvas, 96 x 72 x 2 1/4 inches, 243.8 x 182.9 x 5.7 cm.