

Culture House x Latela Curatorial Announce “Seen/Unseen: Linda Stein and Mil Lubroth”

Exhibition of mixed media by two historically excluded Jewish-American women artists

Washington, D.C. March 4, 2022 | Latela Curatorial and Culture House are excited to announce the exhibition *Seen/Unseen: Linda Stein and Mil Lubroth*

Jewish-American artists Linda Stein and Mil Lubroth’s late abstract and early contemporary paintings, works on paper, and collages have largely escaped the public eye. Connected by their semi-abstract, colorful aesthetics as well as a shared sense of outsidership and unbelonging, both artists’ styles broke from the artistic norms of the 1960s-1990s. Stein’s and Lubroth’s works, while so similar to each other, are difficult to place within the canon of 1960s abstraction, early feminist art, or neo-expressionism.

Was it their stylistic departures from the fashionable art movements of the time; their outsider identities—Stein’s lesbian sexuality and commitment to gender fluidity, and Lubroth’s position as an American woman artist painting Jewish, Islamic, and Western motifs in midcentury Spain; or the exclusion faced by many women artists throughout history, that their bodies of work have evaded more widespread recognition?

In looking closely at Stein’s Profiles series of over 1,000 androgynized, glyph-like faces that all begin below the eyes, and Lubroth’s faceless or half-faced figures lyrically floating through multicultural architectural space, there is a sense that the subjects of these works are meant to be both seen and unseen.

From a social and psychological perspective, to be witnessed fully by Stein’s and Lubroth’s local over-cultures could have come with ostracization, disrespect, and cruelty. Were these artists using figurative abstraction as a mechanism for protected expression? Whether subconscious or intentional, figurative abstraction could have been a means to an end, a formal device for revealing what they wished and blurring the rest. This approach would allow Stein and Lubroth to answer the call of the creative life while mitigating potential inflammation. Incidentally, in step with the increase of advocacy around gender inclusivity and the embrace of multiculturalism, both artists’ late career works feature more perceptible themes and less abstraction.

Stein and Lubroth are each overdue for a US exhibition that centers their inventive and enigmatic styles. Though these two artists never met, through the similarities in their work and biographies, a mirror is created across time and space. *Seen/Unseen* is a conversation about the necessity of breaking convention, the ways artists reconcile the vulnerability of authentic expression with the solace of creative expression, and what it means to be remembered after historical exclusion.

***Seen/Unseen: Linda Stein and Mil Lubroth* will be on view March 26-May 14, 2022 at Culture House DC located at 700 Delaware Ave SW, Washington, DC 20024. Gallery hours are Saturdays, 11 AM to 2 PM and by appointment. All artwork displayed is available for purchase. All inquiries for art purchases should be directed to Latela Curatorial: studio@lateladc.com.**

About the Artists:

Linda Stein (b. 1943)

Linda Stein is an intersectional Jewish, feminist, LGBTQ artist, activist, educator, and writer, who has been making art for five decades. Her works are in the collections of Elizabeth Sackler, Gloria Steinem, Loreen Arbus, Melva Bucksbaum and Raymond Leary, the Leslie Lohman Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum, Smith College, Rutgers University, and the United States Institute of Peace, among others. Stein's art archives are held at Smith College, and her education archives are now the property of Penn State University. Her work has been studied by a range of scholars, including Joan Marter, Jann Matlock, and Gail Levin. Stein is also the Founding President of the non-profit Have Art: Will Travel! Inc. (HAWT) for gender and social equity.

In 2020, Penn State established an endowment supporting the Linda Stein Upstander Award, to be awarded to a scholar annually in perpetuity. In 2018, Stein was honored as one of Women's eNews' 21 Leaders for the 21st Century. In 2017, Stein received the NYC Art Teachers Association/UFT Artist of the Year award, and in 2016, she received the Artist of the Year Award from the National Association of Women Artists for "Outstanding Contribution to the Arts."

Stein was awarded large-scale public outdoor commissions at Portland State University in Colorado and East Hampton Airport in New York. Stein has received grants and residencies from Squire Foundation, Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, Djerassi Foundation, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Hunter College, New York DECA, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Suffolk BOCES Arts and Humanities, and the America the Beautiful Fund. Stein was represented by Flomenhaft Gallery in Chelsea, New York from 2005 until 2017 and Longstreth Goldberg in Naples, Florida from 2005 to 2012. Stein received her master's degree from Pratt Institute and her bachelor's from Queens College. She also attended the Art Students League, Pratt Graphics Center and the School of Visual Arts. She currently lives and works in New York, NY, Cambridge, MA, and East Hampton, NY.

Mil Lubroth (1926-2004)

Mil Lubroth (1926-2004) was an American born artist who until her passing lived and worked in Madrid, Spain. Her colorful, semi-abstract paintings, which often combined Jewish, Arab and Christian symbolism, were described as "light and music, subtlety and suggestion, full of energy and joy" by Catherine Coleman, curator at the Reina Sofia Museum. Her annual open studio, held every November, was an important celebration of the Spanish art scene.

Born Mildred Schleifer, Lubroth studied at Brooklyn College (1944); Tyler School of Fine Arts (1945), Philadelphia; the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, where she received her BA (1947); Black Mountain College, North Carolina (1948); the Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago (1950); Academie für Angewandte Kunst, Vienna, where she was a Fulbright Scholar (1951); and the Humanities Institute, Nüremberg, Germany (1972). She was an invited fellow at Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Sweet Briar (1978-9), Clemson University, South Carolina (1982), and the Kennedy Center, Washington, DC (1984).

Lubroth was influenced by the whimsical work of Paul Klee as well as by Robert Rauschenberg and Cy Twombly. She lived in Paris before moving with her husband to Madrid, where she raised her four children. The richly layered culture of Spain inspired her to weave together Jewish, Islamic and Western influences in her decorative and often mysterious work. Lubroth was the first North American Woman to exhibit at Madrid's Cultural Center, and her work has been exhibited by institutions worldwide including solo shows at Lorca Gallery, Madrid; Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, La Rabida, Sevilla; Casino Estoril, Portugal; Atalaya Palace, Madrid; Gloria Luria Gallery, Miami; Galeria de São Francisco, Lisbon; Susquehanna Gallery, Amsterdam; Asia Art Gallery, Hong Kong; Carminel Gallery, New York; and Alianza Francesca de Polanco, Mexico, among others.

Lubroth's work resides in public and private collections in Barcelona, Madrid, and Castellon, Spain, as well as Des Moines, IA; New York, NY; Washington, DC; Verona, Italy; Sydney, Australia; Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; and Skopje, Yugoslavia, and more.

Statements about Linda Stein's Profiles series:

"These provocative head studies – frequently in a grid formation– both reveal and obscure her subjects, thus invoking a range of associations. Vivid hues, elaborate patterns, and pronounced textures convey various moods – from the celebratory to the contemplative, from the whimsical to the profound." - Joan Marter

"Over the years, my motif evolved into a facial profile, rather than full face, with a significant caveat: no eyes. I was compelled to focus on the facial profile starting just below them. I found that I could not draw eyes in those days, however much I tried. There was an internal pull preventing me from drawing them. Why? My guess now, thirty years later, is that it was because I was struggling with my sexual identity and wanted not to be seen. I was embarrassed, ashamed and in hiding. My life in those days was too confusing, too painful to have eyes on me, even from my own sketches. Without awareness, I started drawing the face just below the eyes. It wasn't a conscious decision; it just happened." - Linda Stein

Statements about Mil Lubroth:

"Mil Lubroth was an American artist of Polish and Russian descent who came to settle in Madrid, where her chic, short name took on an extra meaning. In castellano, Mil means a thousand. Just right for an artist whose work could never be "pinned down," or categorized by any one theme or direction." - Ysabel de la Rosa

"From the sixties, [Lubroth's] long residence in Spain influenced and enriched her work with rich and warm materials, and a heightened awareness of color, both of which characteristics were not far from the influences of the Spanish informalism. Her work became more intimate and secret, it reflected a delicate lyricism and a veiled significance more or less symbolic, which evoked the religious art of the ancient Mediterranean and Judaic styles." -Antonio Bonet Correa

About Latela Curatorial:

Latela Curatorial is a full service art advisory studio based in Washington DC that specializes in the weaving together of conceptual art projects and curatorial services for art collections. Through intuitive arts leadership, LC's core mission is to continuously question how "support" is defined in the artworld and advocate on behalf of the artist and arts workers. LC's attitude is to nurture with a matriarchal approach: creating generative (rather than solely transactional) opportunities for artists, collectors and communities alike.

Latela Curatorial's holistic approach includes organic placemaking, public art, large-scale art procurement, exhibition curation, collections management, and community workshops. LC is particularly passionate about raising the bar for support of the arts ecosystem in the nation's capital. LC excels in working with art collectors as well as designers/architects/developers in an ever-gentrifying area and underrepresented art market to augment the area's artistic currents and talents. In addition to client work and rotating exhibitions, LC helms two special projects: *GLB Memorial Fund for the Arts* and the annual *See Support Collect: Women in the Arts* Initiative.

About Culture House:

Founded on the principle that art is a catalyst for change in the community, Culture House is dedicated to providing inspiration and motivation for those who encounter it, either through experiences or events. The mission of Culture House is to provide a functional art space for all to enjoy and learn more about the arts culture through exhibitions, events, live performances, and artist workshops. As an art object itself, with the exterior fully painted by renowned Atlanta-based muralist HENSE, 700 Delaware serves as a pillar for creativity in our nation's capital.

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