

Alexander Gray Associates

New York
510 West 26 Street
New York NY 10001
United States
Tel: +1 212 399 2636
www.alexandergray.com

Germantown
224 Main Street, Garden Level
Germantown NY 12526
United States
Tel: +1 518 537 2100



Melvin Edwards, *Música das Correntes Partidas (Song of the Broken Chains) (Modelo para Monumento / Model for Monument)*, 2019. Welded steel in 2 parts 26 3/8 x 63 1/4 x 25 1/2 in overall (67 x 160.7 x 64.8 cm overall)

Frieze New York

May 5 – 9, 2021
The Shed, Manhattan

Alexander Gray Associates presents an exhibition of recent works by six Gallery artists: **Melvin Edwards, Jennie C. Jones, Harmony Hammond, Lorraine O'Grady, Joan Semmel** and **Valeska Soares**. The works on view evoke, complicate, and reimagine the nature of links and relationships between people and artworks while revealing various facets of each artist's practice. Each of the artists in the Gallery's presentation is the subject of a recent, ongoing, or upcoming major institutional exhibition.

Melvin Edwards's pioneering works are rooted in African American history and in a lifelong exploration of the physical and representational possibilities of sculptural materials. In *Song of the Broken Chains* (2019), Edwards expands on a series of chain works he began to create in the early 2000s. While the majority of these pieces feature

Alexander Gray Associates

New York
510 West 26 Street
New York NY 10001
United States
Tel: +1 212 399 2636
www.alexandergray.com

Germantown
224 Main Street, Garden Level
Germantown NY 12526
United States
Tel: +1 518 537 2100

upright columns of forged links, *Song of the Broken Chains* presents a trio of shattered chains scattered on the ground. While the broken chains might suggest a narrative of freedom from slavery or oppression, Edwards insists on a more extensive reading: For him, the chains are also visual manifestations of kinship, the connections between individuals. *Song of the Broken Chains* anchors the Gallery's presentation, while the monumental sculpture for which it serves as a maquette is included in *Brighter Days*, Public Art Fund's survey exhibition of the artist's outdoor sculptures, on view at City Hall Park from May 4 – November 28, 2021. Edwards's work is also included in *Grief and Grievance: Art and Mourning in America*, on view at the New Museum through June 6, 2021.

The elusive structure of connections between human beings, history, and aesthetics is a central concern in the work of **Lorraine O'Grady**. In 1991, when she was best known for eruptive performances like *Mille Bourgeoise Noire*, O'Grady's first one-person exhibition marked a significant conceptual shift for the artist, as she turned her focus from performance interventions to works on the wall. Among the photomontages she produced are a pair of quadriptychs, *Gaze and Dream* (1991/2019), which display a new aesthetic spareness and psychological directness. These pivotal works signal the distillation of key concepts for O'Grady—the operation of the body in relation to itself, to other bodies, and to the vicissitudes of perception and representation—and the ways in which bodies and artworks can simultaneously be subject to and resistant to history. In conjunction with the Gallery's presentation, *Gaze and Dream* are featured in the artist's retrospective, *Lorraine O'Grady: Both/And*, on view at the Brooklyn Museum through July 18, 2021.

Jennie C. Jones's rigorously minimal compositions engage viewers visually and aurally, working across mediums including painting, sculpture, sound, and installation. Conceptually and historically nuanced, Jones's works absorb and rework legacies of modernism and minimalism, deploying meticulously pared-down compositions to highlight the experience of sound within the visual arts. A new corner piece, *Untitled, (Black, Cropped, Crescendo)* (2021) continues Jones's recent practice of painting acoustic absorber panels. Here Jones parallels visual occlusion with auditory muffling: by covering the panels in black acrylic, she hides them from both sight and hearing. The process of allowing the paint to evenly soak into the fabric panel to create subtle texture variations, Jones states, "became an existential back and forth struggle ... towards an impossible flawlessness." The artist's work is included in *Grief and Grievance: Art and Mourning in America*, on view at the New Museum through June 6, 2021. Jones's solo exhibition at the Guggenheim Museum opens January 2022.

Valeska Soares's works find an evocative equilibrium between affect and abstraction. Meticulously composed, the works deploy formally restrained strategies of minimalism and conceptualism to parse the nature of interpersonal connections and evoke tender, sometimes painful emotions. Her *For To* series features dedication pages torn from antique books. The pages reveal the forgotten emotional lives of authors and gift givers, with each inscription gesturing to an experience of emotional connection. Soares's precise arrangements of the pages into pale gradients and fluid, organic shapes render the works aesthetically moving compositions in their own right, balancing their emotional and visual aspects.

Throughout her career, **Joan Semmel** has been recognized for her striking figurative paintings and inventive incorporation of the camera in composing her images. *High Five* (2021) furthers Semmel's use of the camera as it relates to her process, by signaling its presence through the use of cropping and her reflected image. At the same time, Semmel's technique combines gestural brushwork and expressive color, which links back to her roots in Abstract Expressionism. As she explains, "While my work developed through series, the connecting thread across decades is a single perspective: being inside the experience of femaleness and taking possession of it culturally. I have used both the mirror and the camera as strategies to destabilize the point of view (who is looking at whom), and to engage the viewer as a participant." This presentation precedes the artist's retrospective, *Joan Semmel: Skin In The Game*, opening at the Pennsylvania Academy of The Fine Arts on October 28, 2021.

In recent years, **Harmony Hammond** has deepened the complex texture and materiality of her paintings with interplays of scale and hue. Among the most recent paintings is *Small Brown Cross* (2020) which incorporates found burlap and grommets inserted in an irregular grid along the surface of Hammond's signature layers of thick paint.

Alexander Gray Associates

New York
510 West 26 Street
New York NY 10001
United States
Tel: +1 212 399 2636
www.alexandergray.com

Germantown
224 Main Street, Garden Level
Germantown NY 12526
United States
Tel: +1 518 537 2100

Building on her recent series of *Chenilles*, works like *Small Brown Cross* are punctuated with protrusions, holes, seams and fraying edges, foregrounding notions of suture and concealment—of hidden layers, spaces, or narratives that lie beneath the surface. A pioneer of feminist and queer discourse, Hammond continues to parse—and refute—the strictures of modernist compositions while refiguring modernist tools including grids, crosses, and monochromes in order to invite content into the realm of abstraction. The artist's survey exhibition *Harmony Hammond: Material Witness* opened in 2019 at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, Connecticut and traveled to the Sarasota Art Museum, Florida in the Fall of 2020.