

Susan Eley  
— Hudson —  
Fine Art

***Interplay***

***Figurative paintings by Carole Eisner, Kentaro Hiramatsu,  
Emily LaCour, Silvina Mamani Kathy Osborn, Nan Ring,  
Steve Singer, Ruth Shively and Barbara Strasen***

August 20 – September 20, 2020  
433 Warren St, Hudson, NY 12534



Opening Reception: Saturday, August 22, 5 – 7 PM\*

*I've missed the nearness of friends, the tenderness of being hip-to-hip on the couch. Our bodies help us understand so much of our experience. And so many of their ways of understanding are no longer allowed. This is not to mourn another loss in a season of loss, though it is a loss. This is to encourage relishing the tactile that we are allowed. The forearms we can squeeze, the pillow we can collapse back into, the salt or fresh or pool water that can hold up our whole body, even if only for the shortest dip.*

"The Lightning Notes," Caitie Whelan, July 30, 2020

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We are delighted to announce the opening of ***Interplay***, a group exhibition featuring the work of eight SEFA artists, opening in our Hudson, NY location on August 20, and remaining on view through September 20, 2020. COVID-19 restrictions permitting, we plan to celebrate the opening with a scaled back reception on Saturday, August 22, 5-7 PM.

NEW YORK CITY - 46 West 90th Street, Floor 2, New York, NY, 10024 - Open by Appointment

HUDSON - 433 Warren Street, Hudson, NY, 12534 - Thursday-Monday, 11am-5pm

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Our most basic instinct as humans is to be with one another. We gravitate towards friends, family and lovers, inhabiting the same space, playing games and sports, sharing meals, touching elbows, hugging and kissing. COVID-19 restrictions have robbed global humanity of this most fundamental privilege of being together, as social distancing keeps us physically apart from all but those in our trusted pods.

In a terrible, twisted paradox, being near each other—a most human of all *good* things—is now considered *bad* through the eyes of the pandemic. In this horrid, historic moment, acting on our most basic urges to gather with loved ones only increases risk of disease and death. The irony is unfathomable.

This too shall pass; we will secure a vaccine, the virus will abate and we will be with each other once again. In the meantime, the exhibition *Interplay* celebrates what we are missing so dearly now—togetherness and community.

In selecting the artists for *Interplay*, we looked at various reasons artists paint figures together on a surface. We found that there are three broad categories, looking across the history of figurative art and into the present: to demonstrate spatial relations between figures on a plane in a sort of playful encounter of objects moving through space; to tell stories and drive a narrative; and lastly, to express emotional relationships and connections between people.

## ABOUT THE ARTWORK

**CAROLE EISNER'S** faceless figures—from her series of Swimmers and Dancers, painted in the 1980s-90s—reflect our most athletic, lithe selves. Their role on the canvas is not to make themselves known as individuals, but to keep the eye moving around the composition, enhancing the spatial rhythm, as they whirl and undulate.

Similarly, the nude women in **SILVINA MAMANI'S** *Escape* and *Melodia*, acrylic paintings on wallpaper fragments, are the letters in her visual alphabet. Like a frieze of female dancers, they move across the surface with arched and twisting forms, pulling our eye from side to side.

**STEVE SINGER'S** luminous beach scenes in cool tones of watercolor, have pops of people standing and sitting on the beach, punctuating the seascape and countering the horizontal pull of ocean and sand.

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In **BARBARA STRASEN'S** two mixed media creations, she uses the figures to tell a surprising story of seemingly disparate elements. *Rococo Modo* brings together contemporary women, clad in bikinis and sunbathing, conversing with their counterparts from the 18<sup>th</sup> century—figures Strasen extracts from a painting called *The Musical Contest* by Jean-Honore Fragonard (ca.1754-55).

A storyteller par excellence, **KATHY OSBORN'S** small oil paintings on paper feature literal doll house figurines in doll houses, set up, photographed and painted with the express purpose of introducing unspoken dialog between characters, in eerily disturbing scenarios.

In **NAN RING'S** *Of the Broken*, we see a winged figure facing to the back and a portrait of a woman in profile on the left, ghosted and barely visible in the diaphanous, pinky sfumato landscape. Are they the same woman in different guises, lovers or friends? It is impossible to know their story.

The three paintings by **EMILY LaCOUR** offer us pairs of people, lounging, embracing and fishing. So much at peace, and in unity with one another and with their surroundings, the figures in each painting are barely discernible from the landscapes which they inhabit.

**RUTH SHIVELY** is known for her sweeping, breathy and extremely expressive figurative paintings. *Interplay* features an extended family enjoying each other's company on a lakeside dock; and a young woman beseeching another woman under a canopy of lush foliage, among other artworks.

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