

Susan Eley

Fine Art

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Fall Solo Shows

Marilyn Church

Eunju Kang



Susan Eley Fine Art, NYC
46 West 90th Street, Floor 2
New York, NY 10024



September 8—October 22, 2022

Opening Reception: Thursday, September 8, 5-7PM

To inaugurate the Fall season in NYC, Susan Eley Fine Art is pleased to announce *Fall Solo Shows* with Marilyn Church and Eunju Kang. These two exhibitions of paintings and prints mark Church's and Kang's debut as solo artists with SEFA.

Church will exhibit figurative paintings, primarily acrylic on canvas with elements of collage, and mixed media works on cedar planks. Kang's practice will be represented by monoprints and large watercolor paintings on paper, reflecting the artist's unique minimalist expression of the still life genre.



MARILYN CHURCH

Born in New York, Marilyn Church attended Indiana University and Pratt Institute. After her studies, Church worked in fashion illustration until a friend suggested that she consider becoming a courtroom painter. "After five years of fashion illustration, I was thrilled to have the opportunity to draw from life," says the artist.

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Church was a courtroom artist for more than fifty years, with her artwork broadcast on every major TV channel and in *The New York Times*. Church has had the privilege of witnessing some of the best legal minds at work—as well as the opportunity to be voyeur and artist at the trials of Bernie Madoff, Martha Stewart and John Gotti, among others. Church explains: “The tension and high emotional drama of the courtroom never disappointed; it was always exciting to draw in court.”

Parallel to her regular work at court, Church painted in her studios on the Upper West Side and later in Amagansett, NY, where she has spent weekends and summers since 1979. One might be forgiven for thinking Church the painter and Church the courtroom artist are two different people. The paintings in Church’s personal practice are characterized by colorful, abstract figures—mostly women in intimate, interior settings. “My paintings still address humanity with all its joys and woes, but without trying to seek a likeness,” says Church. After years of rendering specific people in the courtroom, Church relishes the elusive quality and ambiguity in her paintings, rendered in a loose and lush manner.

Her exhibition at SEFA includes five paintings depicting women alone or in pairs. Generally, Church places a figure in the foreground with a second or third woman obscured in the shadows. The artist points out that the ghostly figure, off to the side or in the background, is often another aspect or facet of the first person.

Church favors a palette of hot yellows, bright reds and deep purples; the saturated colors refer to the land and sea scape of her beloved Amagansett. “The sunsets, sunrises and the expansiveness of the Atlantic Ocean always find a way into my figurative and abstract paintings,” says Church.

To make the surface of her paintings come alive, Church peels dried paint from her palette and collages it onto the canvas, sometimes with bits of textile. A series of six intimately-scaled, mixed media paintings on cedar shingles—salvaged from her roof replacement project in 2012—complete the exhibition at SEFA NYC.

BIOGRAPHY

Marilyn Church is an artist whose work has straddled two very different worlds for over five decades. She moves easily between courtroom art and fine art. After years of observing and drawing at high-profile trials in the tense atmosphere of the courtroom, she realized that the

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whole truth is not easily knowable. Thus, her paintings explore the aspects of people that remain hidden, impenetrable and mysterious. Her figures are not specific, and in fact are nearly abstractions. The backgrounds are ambiguous and fluid. Human forms and movements of vibrant shapes change direction and pass beyond their boundaries. Church's courtroom illustrations inform her fine art and her deep passion and attachment to both are clear. She moves easily between sketching Bernie Madoff or John Gotti and painting abstract figurations.

Living by the ocean for many years, Church is influenced by the textures of the coast: seaweed, sand, sea glass, driftwood and the myriad shades and reflections of blue skies, bright sunsets and colors—all intensified or bleached by the sun. These visuals and sentiments are expressed in a variety of media: transparent layers of paint, opaque dried acrylic textures, watercolor, fabric and wood contrasted with meandering lines. Courtroom sketches rarely leave time for nuance, but painting allows for a powerful fusing of the energy of courtroom confrontations with the daring, intuitive and symbolic narratives that enfold in Church's art. Her works advocate reaching out to understand our fragmented nature and the beauty of the fleetingness of life.

ARTIST STATEMENT

My focus and fascination is the abstraction of the figure—a continuous theme throughout my career as an artist. The figure and its emotional impact always resonated for me as a courtroom artist and found its way into my work as a fine artist. But in my painting and mixed media works, I am freed from any boundaries and am more open to intuition, dream images and improvisation. In this process of discovery, a narrative eventually emerges, however illusive it appears. It is often cloaked in mystery, eroticism and ambiguity. – Marilyn Church, 2015



EUNJU KANG

A mid-career painter from Korea, Eunju Kang moved to the United States with her family at age fourteen. She received a BFA in painting from UC Santa Barbara and a second BFA in illustration from Pasadena Art Center before moving to NYC to paint and teach. Kang has always favored working from observation, whether painting a vase of flowers, the view from her studio window or most recently, still lifes composed of single flowers, fruits and vegetables.

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As for many artists, the pandemic has been an incredibly fruitful time for Kang. The eight watercolors featured at SEFA were painted in the past two years as part of a series of still lifes. Isolated at home, Kang had hours to carefully observe and paint the mundane objects she gathered and carried home—flowers, sticks, leaves and weeds found on bike rides or walks, or fruits, vegetables and herbs from local grocers and farmers' markets.

"I appreciate all these things I find in nature—be they in full bloom or decaying. I don't judge what I see, but want to give each object the attention it is due," Kang says. "I find that my intense focus on a tiny flower or stem helps me to control and organize my world—it is a glimpse into honesty."

Recently, Kang returned from a trip to LA with a date plant, which eventually made its way into a watercolor painting. During the same trip she ate hairy crabs with her sisters. Noticing how she was gazing at the crab shell at the end of the meal, her sister cleaned it and gave it to her to bring home. After amassing dozens of objects, she carefully selects and curates particular items to sit together on a surface. When a composition sings, she renders it in watercolor. Kang does not sketch, but rather gradually builds up a likeness from layers of the translucent colors, toned up or down depending on the result she wishes to achieve.

"My intention is not to replicate what I see, but to translate what these things in nature make me feel," says Kang. "My observation is so intense. I can look at the tiniest leaf for so long, sometimes over several days, as it begins to decompose, change color and shape." At first glance, viewers may sense disparate elements on a page; a second look reveals that these objects are in concert with one another, sitting together in perfect harmony, buzzing happily with just the right tension and balance.

BIOGRAPHY

Eunju Kang was born and raised in Daegu, Korea and moved to California as a teenager with her family in the 1970s. Eunju was always an avid doodler, often in her textbooks, which became a helpful communication tool as she adjusted to her new life. Since the early 90s, Eunju has lived and worked in NYC, painting, printmaking and turning her doodles into a successful business with her sisters.

Kang earned fine art degrees at UC Santa Barbara and Pasadena Art Center College of Design, where she graduated with distinction. She has been awarded residencies at The Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown (FAWC), the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and the Vermont

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Studio Center. She has taught at the L.A. County High School for the Arts, the ArtCenter College of Design and the School of Visual Art in NYC. Her fine art is in private collections around the world, and her illustration work has been used in packaging and ad campaigns by Godiva Chocolate, Aveda, Simon & Schuster and many others.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Each day I look for a surprise, something spontaneous, both intended and not intended. On my daily bike rides, I find beauty in nature and in everyday life, sometimes in the most mundane places. As I get older, I stop and take in what I see: colors, shapes, flowers, sky. All of these images come with me to the studio. I add, subtract, blur, clear, and then the surprise of it all comes, a simple gesture both deliberate and not deliberate. This unexpected outcome drives me every day. – Eunju Kang