

# *Medium and Memory*

Curated by Griselda Pollock



*The Sea, The Sea [Iris Murdoch, 1978]*, 2020, Benjamin Hannavy Cousen

**Medium and Memory** - Griselda Pollock  
7th September – 21st November 2023

HackelBury is delighted to be hosting the group exhibition *Medium and Memory* curated by art historian and contemporary art writer Griselda Pollock.

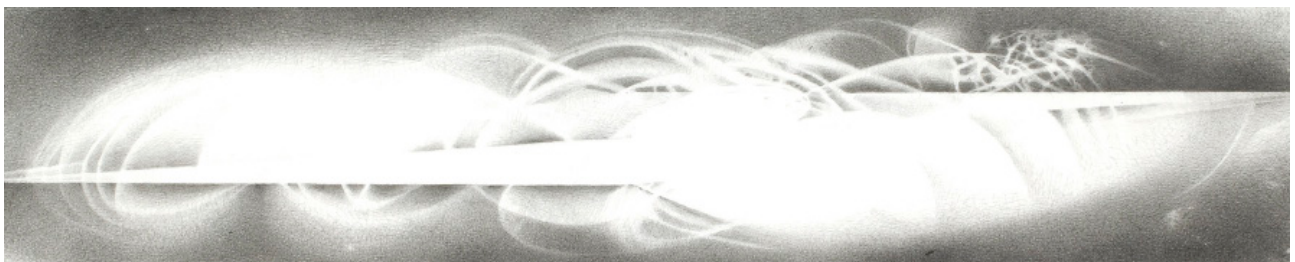
*Medium and Memory* stages four conversations pairing eight artists from different countries, generations, ethnicities, and personal histories who all share a deep engagement with the materiality of their media—painting drawing, moving image, photography and photo-collage—while focussing on memory—personal, historical, cultural, suppressed, discovered, restored.

Putting a still resonant, modernist medium-consciousness into tension with a post-modern sense of responsibility to ‘the burden of history’, these artists explore an ethical dimension in contemporary art—a refusal to forget—and the potential of contemporary art for aesthetic transformation of traumatic legacies of war, famine, genocide, colonialism and de-industrialization as well as the memory-effacing effects of the digital age.

## The Conversations

I

**Christine Taylor Patten** works with a crow quill pen and black ink on paper creating abstract, meditative drawings that explore time, movement and change by a focus on the turning of a plane. Created by the accumulation of tiny strokes—the movement of her wrist making a single mark—her drawings build up densities that actually reveal light as her strokes block out the whiteness of the paper. This is evident in her monumental project macro/micro (begun in 1999) that pairs seven monumental drawings (from 2 to 7 metres), all titled with reference to John Lennon's dream for a peaceful world in his song 'Imagine', with 2000 micro drawings and related tangents, each only 2.5 cm x 2.5 cm in size. This massive drawing project reveals infinite possibilities for this simple protocol of seeing where each drawing takes her, from the geometric to the organic, from the formal to the hilarious, as they unexpectedly discover what the scientists and mathematicians who write about her work suggest echoes their understanding of the unplanned unfolding of the cosmos. We exhibit *Imagine*<sup>3</sup> with 9 Tangents from the 2000 drawing micro series and paired drawings inspired by a phrase from Jane Austen.



*Imagine to the fifth power*, 2007, Christine Taylor Patten

**Benjamin Hannavy Cousens** has developed an abstract protocol for painting that materializes, and thus makes visible, the 'colour unconscious' we hardly notice in literature as seen in *The Sea*, *The Sea* (Iris Murdoch, 1978) and *1984 #2* (George Orwell, 1949) and works from Asimov and Virginia Woolf. Systematically mapping the sequence of colour words occurring in his chosen text, the artist creates paintings by laying down a line of paint for each colour in the sequence of its appearance across the book. The paintings thus reveal the unseen, but, for the readers, unconsciously registered, coloured imaginary of major works of fiction, while the resulting physical build-up of his paint application creates an unexpected dimensionality for painting that takes on almost sculptural form.

## II

**Judith Tucker** works at the intersection of social history, personal memory, ecology and place through drawing and painting, often working concurrently with a poet sharing her concerns. In her early work, she explored inter-generationally-transmitted trauma of her family's displacement and forced migration. Her recent paintings and drawings focus on a British history through 'Fitties', historically the holiday cottages and gardens, used by the now-destroyed Northern mining communities, on the Lincolnshire coast and flatlands, themselves tragically at risk from climate change and environmental degradation. Alongside her atmospheric night paintings of Fitties, for this exhibition she has produced a series of new drawings working from archival photographs from the 1930s of the miners' holiday cottages, thus layering, in different media, memories of memories while speaking to the present.



*Why destroy a thing of beauty*, 2019, Judith Tucker

**Asel Kadyrkhanova** combines installation, moving image, sound and drawing to confront what is termed 'the post-Soviet condition' of many, radically different societies, all emerging after 1989 from the repressed trauma and unexamined legacies of both Imperial Russian colonization and mid-twentieth century Stalinist totalitarianism. As a post-generation artist, she explores the paradox of an unspoken weight and cultural absence of the memory of the mass famine in, and the political deportations to the gulags, Kazakhstan during the 1930s. In her hand-drawn animated film *All the Dreams We Dream* (2017-2020), the artist draws on childhood memories of travelling through the famine-ridden steppes that she has discovered in rare memoirs referencing the famine. Making drawings from their words exposes the artist herself to the traumatic horror she is bringing into visibility. Evocatively animated, the film takes us too on a journey over the deserted steppes in snowy moonlight, entering emptied yurts to encounter shocking, almost indecipherable chimeras created by starvation, clothed now in the compassion of her aesthetic wit(h)nessing.



*All the Dreams We Dream*, 2017-2020, Aseel Kadyrkhanova

### III

**Sutapa Biswas**, born in India and arriving in Britain aged 3, registers another journey through the medium of film in *Lumen* (2021) from which we exhibit framed stills as independent artworks. While still a student in the early 1980s, she became a leading figure in the Black Artists Movement in Britain. As a conceptual artist deeply engaged in critical rethinking the legacies of colonialism and endemic racism, her work addresses in several media the entanglements of class, race, gender and memory. Her film, *Lumen* (2021), imaginatively retraces the journey made by her mother, with her children, to the UK from traumatized post-Partition India, evoking her sense of loss and displacement when arriving in a virulently racist Britain. Set in an Elizabethan mansion, reminding us of the material gains Europe acquired through colonialism, and featuring a single woman delivering a Shakespearean monologue (played by Natasha Patel), Biswas layers her evocatively filmed footage of a return to India today with archive footage and photographs of British colonial rule in India. Also in the show is her haunting short film about love and loss, punctured by exploding birds and the sound of children's laughter, *Magnesium Bird* (2004). It mourns the death and transforms memories of the artist's father, a political intellectual whose forced exile from post-independence India led the family to its relocation in Britain.



*Lumen*, 2021, Sutapa Biswas



**Bracha L. Ettinger** works through a past she unknowingly inherited in transgenerational transmission by transforming a selection of archival images of world wars and genocide using a new medium she developed - an interrupted photocopying process. As a result, her works on papers bear only a ghostly trace 'in ash' of rare photographic documents of scenes of mass murder during the Shoah whose newly created surface she then touches in her present with a colour-laden brush to 'clothe' the traumatic freight of the image and the past with wit(h)ness and fascination—her terms for a prolonged compassionate re-gazing and openness to being with, and refusing to abandon, the pain of the past. HackelBury will show *Matrix Borderline Case no.3* (1990) and the trilogy *Nichsapha (Yearning) - Lapsus* (1991). Fragmentary papers from the interrupted photocopy process are assembled into glass-mounted standing 'figures', which cast their imageless shadow upon the wall. One 'document' to which Ettinger has repeatedly returned, is a rare record of one mass murder of women and children in Ukraine, under German occupation in 1942, painfully resonating with the violence against women and children occurring worldwide, in war and in Ukraine today. Ettinger writes: '*Art not only evokes memory but it creates memory for the future*'.

<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/feel-worlds-pain-beauty>



*Languished / Alanguie – Lapsus, 1991, Bracha L. Ettinger*

IV

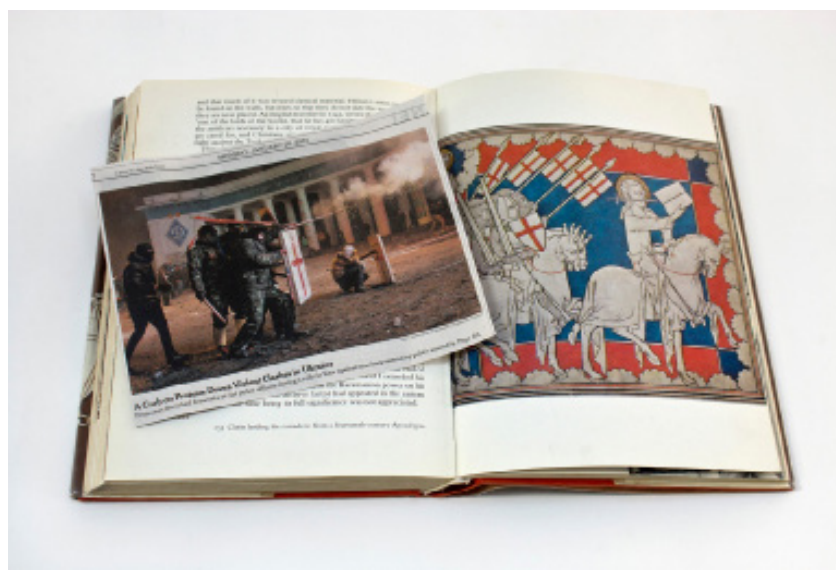
In Revised Edition American artist **Coral Woodbury** uses sumi ink to paint portraits of women artists (from all eras) over the pages of her own copy of an infamous art history textbook, *Janson's History of Art*, which included no women artists for its many editions from 1963 to 1986. Image by image, Woodbury restores the erased cultural memory of creative women, matched to the historical images on the page selected for each artist's re-inscription into an expanded and inclusive history of art. Also included in Coral Woodbury's Revised Edition, and in this show, is US-American artist Joanne Leonard who is one of the first women included in a revised edition of *Janson's History of Art* in 1986 with her work, 'Romanticism is Ultimately Fatal' (1972).



Claude Cahun, 2023, Coral Woodbury



**Joanne Leonard** uses photo-collage to create 'intimate documentary'. HackelBury will exhibit selections from Leonard's on-going project, *Newspaper Diary* (2006 - ) that involves another kind of memory work—a pairing of press photographs from newspapers with images from art history and other books that remind us of older media, soon to be archaic memories, such as printed newspapers and hardcopy books. Leonard's newspaper diarying performs a commentary on personal associations and of cultural memory traversing the space between the museum and the news and now digital media revealing a shared visual imaginary—the cultural store of images and image-memories—that shape the way we understand our present in pre-coded image repertoires of bodies and scenarios. Her daily practice of connecting images from the news with paintings from history also serve to mark time in her own life. Their creation enables her personally 'to register the day's passing' while 'responding to things in the world' as the world's diarist in images.



*Newspaper Diary* series, 2006 - , Joanne Leonard

## About Griselda Pollock

Griselda Pollock has curated exhibitions at Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh, Amsterdam (1980), University of Leeds Gallery (1978, 1999, 2006, 2015, 2019-20), The Drawing Centre, London (2006), Freud Museum, London (2009), and as part of 14th Istanbul Biennial (2015). She has written extensively on modern and contemporary art, most recently with a special focus on issues of trauma and cultural memory. Recent publications include *Charlotte Salomon in the Theatre of Memory* (London & New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), *Killing Men & Dying Women: Imagining Difference in 1950s New York Painting* (Manchester University Press, 2022), and co-edited with Max Silverman, *Concentrationary Art: Jean Cayrol, the Lazarean and the Everyday in Post-war Film, Literature, Music and the Visual Arts* (Berghahn, 2020), her chapter focussing on the recent work of Scottish contemporary sound artist Susan Philipsz.

## About HackelBury Fine Art

Established in 1998, the London gallery in Launceston Place is committed to nurturing long-term relationships with both artists and clients. It continues to evolve and progress through an expanding program of gallery exhibitions, museum projects and publishing ventures.

The small group of artists with whom HackelBury work, represent a diversity of practice, pushing the boundaries of various media. The work and practice of these artists encompasses the worlds of photography, painting, drawing, sculpture, architecture and performance. Each artist, whether emerging or established, creates work defined by a depth of thought and breadth and consistency of approach.

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## APPENDIX

### About the artists

#### **Benjamin Hannavy Cousen**

Benjamin Hannavy Cousen is a painter and a writer living in the North of England producing very physical paintings which reveal 'colour intensities' which arise from and register the memory of reading. The sculptural density created through his invented syringe method for applying paint follows a protocol derived from the order of colour words as they appear in literary works. He discovers a dimension of literature while also creating a physical tapestry of colour whose application produces, unanticipated, sculptural presence of the materiality of paint.

Since 2015, Benjamin has been represented by Merville Galleries and has had two solo shows in London - *Recent Paintings* (The Mall Galleries, 2017) and *Rings of Saturn and Other Objects* (Gallery 8, St James's, 2022). His work has been exhibited at The London Art Fair and The British Art Fair at the Saatchi Gallery and features in a number of private collections. He has a PhD in Cultural Studies from the University of Leeds and has published widely on visual culture, from Picasso to the film Pink Floyd *The Wall*. He currently works from a studio in Otley just north of Leeds.

#### **Christine Taylor Patten**

Living and working in Taos, New Mexico, Christine Taylor Patten was originally a sculptor and was also a pioneer of laser art before turning to drawing as her major arena. Working with a crow quill pen and ink on paper, she makes drawings that range from the intimate (2.5 x 2.5 cm) to the monumental, having taken 14 years to complete one drawing, *Imagine<sup>7</sup>* (to the seventh power, 2001-2015) measuring 2.3 x 7.3 metres using the same gesture and material as she created 2000 micro drawings, one for each of the two millennia of the common era. Her ongoing project is a series of *Peace* drawings, creating an image for the word peace in 27 languages each evolving from the preceding drawing in exploration of the infinite possibilities she discovers in relation to the turning plane. She has had numerous solo shows, was exhibited at Arter, was part of Saltwater at the 14th Istanbul Biennial, curated by Carolyn Christov Bakargiev in 2015 and participated in group shows in Taos, Sante Fe, and Albuquerque, New Mexico, Washington DC and in New York galleries, notably at the Drawing Center curated by Catherine de Zegher, as well as Leyden Gallery in London and at the Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery of the University of Leeds.

#### **Asel Kadyrhanova**

Born in Almaty, Kazakhstan and working across drawing, embroidery, photography, installation, moving image and animation, Asel Kadyrhanova explores the signs and sites of unrecognized trauma and missing cultural memory in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. She investigates the impact on the 'post-generation' of missing narratives and images in post-totalitarian societies of events such as the Stalin-inflicted famines. Having studied fine art in Kazakhstan and Britain, she is currently the first postdoctoral artist in residence at the Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis. Her choice of media and process explores embodiment, haptic visuality, place and language (especially working visually with the Kazakh, Arabic, Russian and European alphabets). Many of her works offer strong visual metaphors to address lasting Soviet and colonial legacies while also seeking to make visible aspects of pre-Soviet Kazakh society, language and culture. Her work has been exhibited in Hong Kong, Moscow, Baku, Istanbul, Almaty, London, Leeds, Wiesbaden and she was included in *Documenta 15* (2022).

## **Judith Tucker**

Working on various scales in both oil painting and large-scale drawing, Judith Tucker explores the meeting and meanings of often overlooked social histories, personal memory, geography and the freighted meanings of place. Rendering the everyday uncanny through colour and composition, Tucker extends the long tradition of landscape art by her mastery of colour and oil paint and commitment to its uses, to evoke, unsettle, remind and induce a response both to environment and populations on the margins. In 2018 and 2019, she was a finalist in the Jackson's Painting Prize and in 2020, she was awarded the 'Scenes of Everyday Life' category prize. In 2019 she was shortlisted for the first Westmorland Landscape Prize exhibition and in 2020-21 for the New Light Prize. In 2018 she was selected to be one of ten UK artists exhibiting in the inaugural Yantai Biennial, China. Other exhibition venues include Arthouse1 and Collyer Bristow London and many regional galleries throughout the UK, and further afield in Iasi, Romania, Gdansk, Poland, Brno, Czech Republic, Vienna, Austria, Minneapolis and Virginia USA and Yantai, Nanjing and Tianjin in China.

## **Coral Woodbury**

The work of Boston-based artist Coral Woodbury evokes memory and absence, the layering of time, and the poetry of transformation. Drawings and oil paintings reverence the missing and mark encounters with artistic and personal histories. In her *Revised Edition* series, Woodbury brings this focus to the long line of women artists written out of official art history. H.W. Janson's *A History of Art*, first published in 1962, omitted women entirely from its first 29 printings, even as it became the primary textbook in shaping an exclusionary Western canon and understanding of art. Portraits of women artists inked over pages torn from Janson's myopic volume make visible those who were excised from record. Deeply researched and intentionally placed, Woodbury sets up resonant and dissonant visual dialogues between images of women as artists and images of art they studied and confronted. Across her bodies of work, Woodbury explores the power of art to reveal the invisible, express the ineffable, and hold the ephemeral. She has exhibited and participated in fairs, biennials, and residencies from New York to London, Kathmandu to Cuba, Italy to Ireland. Recent honours include Cill Rialaig residency; International Mother Art Prize, Finalist; and exhibition at Newport Art Museum. Her work is held in public and private collections, including Katrin Bellinger Collection and The Women's Art Collection, University of Cambridge.

## **Joanne Leonard**

Joanne Leonard is an American artist renowned for her transformative and expanded conceptual photographic practice which developed into new forms of photo-collage to explore the overlooked spaces, conditions and moments within women's working and parenting lives. She has made a series on heterosexual desire and its tragedies, *Dreams and Nightmares*, loss in pregnancy and loss of memory as seen in dementia patients. She has also created images of the strange and often disturbing beauty of modern domestic appliances and kitchen spaces. Leonard's work was hailed early by American feminist critic Lucy Lippard in her collection *From the Center* (1976) and she is widely studied for intermedial work text and image in an artwork book form, *Being in Pictures: An Intimate Photo Memoir* (2008). Leonard's photographs have been collected by and featured in exhibitions at major museums, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the International Center of Photography, New York, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Her works have been both collected and will be exhibited (until Autumn 2023) by the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

## **Sutapa Biswas**

Born in Shantiniketan, India and growing up in Britain, Sutapa Biswas is an internationally renowned conceptual artist working in many media including drawing, photography, performance, film, and installation. Her work explores both the challenging legacies of colonialism and postcolonial renegotiation of the unrecognized dialogues between European and Indian art and culture. A major figure in Black Arts Movement of the 1980s, she was selected, when still a fine art student, for the era-defining exhibition by black women artists, *The Line Black Line* at the Institute of Contemporary Art, London in 1985 curated by Turner Prize winner Lubaina Himid. Sutapa Biswas's work has been exhibited in the United States of America, Canada and Australia as well widely across Britain, featuring in a major show at the Tate Liverpool. She recently had a double retrospective, titled *LUMEN*, at the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead and Kettle's Yard, London which premiered her most recent film *Lumen* (2021). Her works are in the collection of the Cartwright Hall Collection of British Asian Art, the Tate, London and the University of Leeds Gallery

## **Bracha Ettinger**

Bracha Ettinger is an Israeli and British international visual artist, feminist theorist, psychoanalyst and philosopher. She works across many media, drawing, found images, painting, scannography, notebooks and video. Her artistic practice has generated an original reconceptualization of subjectivity aesthetics and ethics which Ettinger terms *the Matrixial*. Bracha Ettinger's work has appeared in prominent exhibitions, biennales and events around the world, including solo exhibitions at Castello di Rivoli, Turin, The Warehouse, Dallas, Muzeum Slaskie, Katowice, Museo Leopoldo Flores, Univ. Autónoma del Estado de México, Toluca, Museum of City of St Petersburg, Tàpies Foundation, Barcelona; Freud Museum, London; Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels; Israel Museum, Jerusalem, MoMA, Oxford and Centre Pompidou. Her work has also been shown in solo presentations at the Kochi-Muziris Biennale in 2018 and, curated by Griselda Pollock, as part of Carolyn Christov Bakargiev's *Saltwater*, the 14th Istanbul Biennial in 2015. Her work was included in Frieze 2016.