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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Exhibitions at Lehman College Art Gallery and Hall of Fame Art Gallery

### **Framing the Female Gaze: Women Artists and the New Historicism**

*Two CUNY art galleries present perspectives of women artists today*

Exhibition Venues and Dates:

Lehman College Art Gallery, 250 Bedford Park West, Bronx, NY [lehmangallery.org](http://lehmangallery.org)  
October 10, 2023 – January 20, 2024 Reception October 18, 5 - 8 pm

Focus Exhibition:

The Hall of Fame Art Gallery, Bronx Community College (BCC)

2155 University Ave, Bronx, NY [bcc.cuny.edu](http://bcc.cuny.edu)

October 12 – December 12, 2023 Reception October 12, 12 noon - 2 pm

The works of 45 contemporary women artists are reminiscent of paintings of women by French 19<sup>th</sup>-century male artists, then are framed by their own new views of women. Sixty works are on view in *Framing the Female Gaze: Women Artists and the New Historicism* at Lehman College Art Gallery, with a complementary focus exhibition at The Hall of Fame Art Gallery at Bronx Community College.

The women who loom large on canvases, in photographs, prints, sculpture and collage in *Framing the Female Gaze* vitally connect us to political and social issues and to the cultural and social discriminations that women experience now. The works in this exhibition show how women artists today focus their gaze on both women and men. Artists are magicians: they seek subjects for their work from the past, then with new images change what we thought we knew. The artists in *Framing the Female Gaze* looked at the art of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century which marked the beginning of Modernism, of seeing and being seen as conscious subject matter.

Allison Zuckerman's painting *Woman at her Toilette* (2017) is a highlight of the exhibition. Her work, inspired by Seurat, Titian, and a host of other male artists, about whom she notes, "A lot of art was made for men by men: the female figures have been idealized, and they're submissive and anonymous." Women today, and the artists among them, are no longer resigned to being the not-so-obscure objects of male desire. Recast, women are now active and heroic subjects of artworks. Women artists have also turned the tables on men – portraying the male body as an object of beauty, but an object that brings with it traditional connotations of manipulation and vanquishment. Women now objectify men, as men in the past objectified women ("the male gaze").

The exhibition opens with the painting of a male nude, *Portrait of an Actor: Sean Pratt* (1994), by feminist artist Sylvia Sleigh, whose groundbreaking odalisques of men first came to prominence in the 1970s and serve as a touchstone for the show, which then moves forward to pair powerful new works with images inspired by the French art canon, stretching from the classical compositions of Jacques-Louis David from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early work of Pablo Picasso at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The art in *Framing the Female Gaze* coalesces around four themes – the body, sexuality, voyeurism, and the idea of the "female gaze." The exhibition explores those four themes historically, beginning with a reinvention of the goddess image – Shona McAndrew's, *Norah*, a 2016-17 sculpture that references August Rodin's *Iris, Messenger of the Gods* (modeled ca. 1890). She adds to the innate sexuality of her piece by embracing "real" women's bodies, not an idealized stereotype of female beauty damaging to women. The 19<sup>th</sup> century also saw the reemergence of the female nude, often in the languid, passive poses of the female odalisque, reborn in this exhibition in Katie Commodore's *Greg in His Catsuit* (2018); what sets the works of these women artists apart from male interpretations of the female nude is that the women tend to see their subjects as more than the sum of their parts, although in Eunice Golden's mountainous *Landscape #160* (1972), a female artist focuses her gaze on male genitalia the way Gustave Courbet focuses his on female genitalia in *The Origin of the World [L'Origine du monde]* (1866). Women artists who have trained their eye on the female body echo some of the great 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>-century male artists but with a difference. Christie Neptune's *A Guild of Light Shining Bright* (2020) captures the elegance of French salon portraiture by artists Alexandre Cabanal and Carolus-Duran, teacher of John Singer Sargent, but shifts focus to a woman of color. Fay Ku's *The Jungle Has Eyes* (2019) pays homage to Paul Gauguin's Tahitian subjects, along with Cheyenne Julien's Edward Hopper-esque nude *Can't go out, can't stay in*, a 2019 oil that also makes a direct nod to Auguste Rodin's *The Thinker [Le Penseur]* (1904).

The artists exhibiting work in *Framing the Female Gaze* include Lara Alcantara Lansberg, Lizzy Alejandro, Elise Ansel, Claudia Doring Baez, Cecily Brown, Elinor Carucci, Jordan Casteel, Bhasha Chakrabarti, Katie Commodore, Camille Eskill, Lalla Essaydi, Martha Edelheit, Rose Freymuth-Frazier, Scherezade Garcia, Kathleen Gilje, Guerrilla Girls, Eunice Golden, Jenna Gribbon, Mimi Gross, Hilary Harkness, Lewinale Havette, Vera Iliatova, Ayana V. Jackson, Cheyenne Julien, Fay Ku, Yushi Li (in collaboration with Steph Wilson), Shona McAndrew, Marilyn Minter, Jesse

Mockrin, Christie Neptune, Deborah Ory and Ken Browar, Phyllis Gay Palmer, Cecilia Paredes, Celeste Rapone, Arlene Rush, Julia Santos Solomon, Sylvia Sleigh, Jessica Spence, Devorah Sperber, Mickalene Thomas, Sharon Wybrants, Judith Wyer, Allison Zuckerman.

The exhibition, accompanied by a 150-page fully illustrated catalog, is curated by Bartholomew F. Bland, Patricia Cazorla, Georgette Gouveia, and Deborah Yasinsky.

Support for *Framing the Female Gaze* at Lehman College is generously provided by: NYC Department of Cultural Affairs; New York City Council Member Eric Dinowitz; New York State Council on the Arts; Jarvis and Constance Doctorow Family Foundation; Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation; Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation; Edith and Herbert Lehman Foundation; Robert Lehman Foundation; and the Charina Foundation. Art gallery programming at Bronx Community College is supported in part by the Music and Art Fund, BCC Association Inc, the Art and Music Department, and the Office of Academic and Student Success.

### **About Lehman College Art Gallery:**

Always free to the public, Lehman College Art Gallery has been serving the interests of our diverse audience from the Bronx and greater New York City since 1984. The gallery specializes in thematic group exhibitions that bring together famous artists with emerging talents. Education is an integral component of the Gallery's programming and provides the basis of community outreach—from young students to senior citizens.

Lehmanartgallery.org

Tuesday- Saturday 10-4