

freymond- guth Ltd. **fine ARTS**

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Tue – Fri 11 – 18h
Saturday 11 – 17h

Or by appointment

SYLVIA SLEIGH
YORGOS SAPOUNTZIS
The Crystal Palace

8 October - 21 November 2015
Opening 7 October, 18hrs

Concurrently with the exhibition at the gallery, a special selection from these bodies of work will also be Freymond-Guth's presentation at this year's Frieze Art Fair
14 - 17 October 2015
Regent's Park, London
Booth G20

This exhibition juxtaposes a previously never fully exhibited series of paintings by Sylvia Sleigh (UK, 1916- 2010) dating back to 1956- 1960 and new works on textile by Yorgos Sapountzis (*1976 GR, lives in Berlin) conceived both in the context of Sleigh's works and the imagery she generated, as well as a reflection on the history of the classical pose from classicism to today.

The Crystal Palace Park in London - or Crystal Palace Gardens as it is named often - were the grounds surrounding the Crystal Palace- a cast-iron and glass building originally erected in Hyde Park, London, England, to house the Great Exhibition of 1851- at the peak of the glorious Victorian Age. After a fire destroyed parts of the building in 1936 and World War II destroyed the rest, the park was forgotten about and imbruted in great parts until it was finally closed and most of the remaining sculptures were removed in 1959. Until today, several attempts to renovate the park have failed and only a few remaining sculptures and architectural elements can be found.

Throughout her career, Sylvia Sleigh had reflected art history and especially classical poses in her work, with a careful eye on the representation of the male nude and reversing stereotypical artistic themes by featuring naked men in poses usually associated with women. Sleigh's "At the Turkish Bath" (1973) depicts New York's most influential male art critics and curators at the time in the arrangement found in "The Turkish Bath" (1862) by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres while "Concert Champêtre" (1976) takes up the composition of "Concert Champêtre" (1509) by Titian.

Sylvia Sleigh's Crystal Palace Gardens series is the largest today existing group of work that reflects her specific interest in classicism and with its realist view, reveals some of the most significant characteristics of her work in this early group. Apart from the quotation of the classical pose also nature and vegetation being a sort of counter force to the idea of culture: exuberant and exceeding, recapturing territory bit by bit. In all of Sleigh's work a friction between control e.g. architecture, pose or pattern and chaos- overwhelming vegetation or even pubic hair can be found.

At the same time, Sleigh's Crystal Palace Gardens also stands at a time of great fatigue of an Empire and entire world order, the sculptures seem relicts of a passed time and mark not the last also a personal farewell from the styles and customs of a sunken old world, painted shortly before the artist emigrated to the USA to join her husband Lawrence Alloway, working as a curator at Guggenheim in New York.

The view on (public) monuments, sculpture and the appearance of the body in space are also sources of the works on textile, videos, performances and sculptures of Yorgos Sapountzis (*1976). A native of Athens, Greece, Sapountzis is intimately aware of how such structures effect both the topography of a city as well as the way individuals construct their identity.

Public sculptures become protagonists of the artists' own performances and other works that combine elements of theatre, poetry and ritualistic practices, using the specific qualities of a medium to illicit greater interpretive possibilities. At the core of most of his projects are materials that employ flexible and transportable characters such as textile banners that he works onto with ink mono typing of images and thin ribbons loosely attached with fixing pins. In their carefully haphazard appearance, Sapountzis' works evoke a number of associations from banners carried at a protest to classic works of Modernism.

Sapountzis' newest body of works researches sculptures in the public space in former East Berlin- mainly in parks and pedestrian areas. Like Sleigh's Crystal Palace Garden Series, they represent the remains from a sunken empire and like Sleigh's oil paintings, the figures represent role models of social life and culture, its physical ideals and virtues. While the creators of the sculptures remain unrevealed to the audience, Sapountzis chooses fractions of bodies and movements of photos that he collages onto the textiles using monotype printing. The textile ribbons appear both as a formal element pinned to as well as printed into the floating textiles and add to their ephemeral impression that combines object, image and print.

Like in Sylvia Sleigh's paintings, a tension between order and disorder is an important aspect in his work. He is interested in "creating chaos to create order." Sapountzis's work is often suspended between moments of disarray and the formalization of a new structure, playing with the temporal distinctions between the creation and reception of a piece.

For further information and images, please contact the gallery at:
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