

JUDY PFAFF

7 FEBRUARY – 9 MARCH 2019

NEW YORK – MILES MCENERY GALLERY is pleased to present an exhibition of works by Judy Pfaff, on view 7 February through 9 March at 520 West 21st Street. A public reception will be held for the artist on Thursday 7 February from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, featuring an essay by David Levi Strauss.

Often considered a pioneer of installation art, Judy Pfaff's limitlessly innovative work evades categorization and breaks boundaries. In the early 1970s, while she was enrolled in the painting MFA program at Yale, renowned artist Al Held became her lifelong mentor and encouraged her to move beyond the limitations of the picture plane—an idea which she took to exceptional new heights. Oscillating between the two-dimensional and three-dimensional, Pfaff's installations react to and penetrate the spaces they inhabit, transforming them into explosively dynamic environments that entice and engage the viewers' senses.

Pulling from a variety of disciplines—including sculpture, painting, and printmaking—Pfaff's works are unrestricted by the use of a

single medium. In utilizing a diverse range of materials, Pfaff is able to draw inspiration from the realms of both the natural and the spiritual, as well as art historical imagery, and represent their essence in a distinctive and engaging manner.



The title of Irving Sandler's monograph, *Judy Pfaff: Tracking the Cosmos*, hints at the broad reach of Pfaff's art. *Quartet*, her major work in the exhibition at Miles McEnergy Gallery, is the newest manifestation of the artist's ambitious quest to investigate nature, life, and human experience to their fullest. Created from a rich primordial soup of materials, the artist has produced an opulent set of works that she refers to as "wall installs"—tamer translations of the installations she is known for. Forever thinking outside of the box, Pfaff uses a tsunami of materials and objects made and found; photographically derived digital images on paper to aluminum disks, wire fencing, acrylic, melted plastic, paper lanterns, fungus, artificial flowers, electric lighting, encaustics, and more. Complex and captivating, they create an experience that is both visual and tactile, inviting focused contemplation to fully perceive their many intricate parts.

Keeping in line with her oeuvre, Pfaff's two-dimensional works on paper are far from flat. In her most recent pieces, she transforms handwritten account ledgers from India and sales receipts from a druggist in New York into canvases upon which to paint and draw. As David Levi Strauss suggests, "these works are always becoming, moving from one state of things to another, and the state of change extends as well into these works' frames, individually activated and illuminated by fragments of gold and silver leaf."

This notion holds true for all of Judy Pfaff's beautifully uncontained works: always changing and inspiring, and wholly liberated from boundaries of any kind.

Miles McEnergy Gallery will also present a coinciding solo booth of Judy Pfaff's work at the ADAA's The Art Show, from 28 February through 3 March, 2019, at the Park Avenue Armory.

Miles McEnergy Gallery

520 West 21st Street, New York, NY | 525 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011
tel +1 (212) 445 0051 www.milesmcenergy.com

JUDY PFAFF was born in London in 1946. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Washington University in St. Louis, MO in 1971 and graduated from Yale University with a Master of Fine Arts degree in 1973.

Pfaff has had over 100 major solo installations across the country and abroad at such venues as the Chazen Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI; the Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO; the St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis, MO; the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, OH; and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.

Pfaff was the represented artist for the United States in the 1998 São Paulo Biennial. Her work is included in many public and private collections including the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY; Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, MI; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA; Chazen Museum of Art, Madison, WI; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY and National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C.

Pfaff is the recipient of numerous awards including the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Sculpture Center (2014); a MacArthur Fellowship (2004); an Award of Merit Gold Medal for Sculpture from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York (2002); a Bessie Award (1984); and a Guggenheim Fellowship (1983), as well as two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts (1979 and 1986). She is the Richard B. Fisher Professor in the Arts and Co-Chair of the Studio Arts Program at Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY.

Recently, Pfaff was the visiting artist in the Walter Gropius Master Artist Series at the Huntington Museum of Art in Huntington, WV. The artist currently lives and works in Kingston and Tivoli, NY.

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Miles McEnergy Gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM and by appointment.

Press Contact: Clementina Dávila at clementina@milesmcenergy.com and Isabelle Brooks at isabelle@milesmcenergy.com

 @milesmcenergy.gallery

Image: Judy Pfaff, *Quartet One*, 2018

Photographic inspired digital image, wire frame, acrylic, melted plastic, aluminum discs, fungus, paper, glitter, Styrofoam, fluorescent light, drawing in artist's frame,

120.75 x 156 x 32 inches, 306.7 x 396.2 x 81.3 cm