

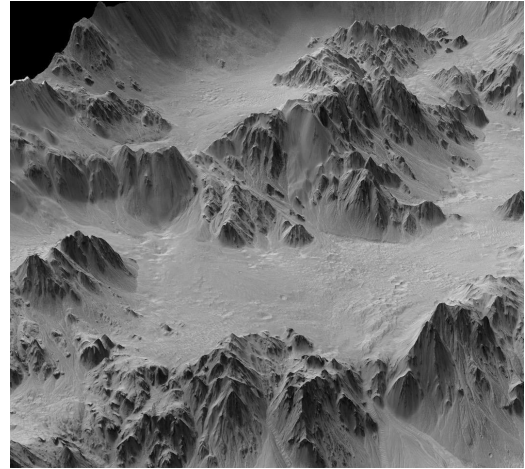
## 'ON HANNAH ARENDT: The Conquest of Space'

Sylvia PLIMACK MANGOLD

Elaine REICHEK

Carey YOUNG

15 February – 26 March 2022



“It has been the glory of modern science that it has been able to emancipate itself completely from all such anthropocentric, that is, truly humanistic, concerns.” – Hannah Arendt

The concluding show in Richard Saltoun Gallery’s year-long program dedicated to the writings of Hannah Arendt, *The Conquest of Space* will present paintings and works on paper by **Sylvia PLIMACK MANGOLD** (b. 1938) in the UK for the first time and pivotal early works by **Elaine REICHEK** (b. 1943) from her first solo show at Rina Gallery, New York in 1975. It will also include a focused selection of works with two new photographs by **Carey YOUNG** (b. 1970).

Hannah Arendt’s essay “The Conquest of Space and the Stature of Man” was first published as “Man’s Conquest of Space” in *The American Scholar* in autumn 1963. It appeared later that year in a special edition of the magazine *The Great Ideas Today*, before being added to the revised and expanded second edition of *Between Past and Future* in 1968. For *The Great Ideas Today*, Arendt was invited to contribute to the section “A Symposium on Space” which addressed the question: Has man’s conquest of space increased or diminished his stature?

With characteristic vision and incisiveness, Arendt’s contribution avoided the aggrandizement of science. Instead, it conjured a dark picture of the human race’s journey into outer space, where our established methods of understanding and engaging with the world are rendered inadequate. She argues that the role of the scientist is to stand outside and beyond

anthropocentrism; and that debates on the nature and status of humankind only constrain scientific inquiry.

Inspired by Arendt's preference for defining herself as "a kind of phenomenologist," the exhibition moves between theoretical and phenomenological considerations of space and its explorations by three remarkable artists.

**Elaine Reichek's paintings in GALLERY 1 are notable for their materiality and texture, which involves gesso, acrylic, thread, and graphite on canvas.** Unlike her Minimalist predecessors, Reichek embraces illusionism and ambiguity. For instance, her use of needle and thread to pierce the surface of the canvas produces an illusory effect that makes each fiber line difficult to distinguish from their painted counterparts. The works in the *Untitled* (1973) series are objects that defy our expectations and confront us with deliberate inconsistencies. They engage their viewer in physical and tactile ways, blurring the boundaries between Minimalism and more material pleasures.

**GALLERY 2 displays several important works by Sylvia Plimack Mangold, each of which engages with the apprehension and representation of space.** Plimack Mangold was one of a generation of artists who turned to questions of space and its perception in the 1970s. Her trompe-l'œil, photorealistic paintings elliptically engage with Minimalism's exploration of space. Their subject matter could be described as sculptural. For instance, *Thirty-six-and three-quarter inch of Rule with light* (1975) uses something as mundane as a wooden ruler to study concepts of measurement, geometry, and light. These subjects would seem to align her with the language and aesthetic concerns of Minimalism. However, her painting technique—which creates the illusion of a real object in space dappled in light—brilliantly contradicts Donald Judd's concept of the "specific object." *Study for Opposite Corner* (1973) features a vertical mirror propped up in a corner that is reflecting the inverse of the corner in front of which it stands. This work further extends the sculptural characteristics of Mangold's paintings, actively manipulating the space she is painting rather than merely depicting it. The exhibition also includes *The Locust Trees 2/87* (1987) and *Winter Maple and Pine* (2007). These paintings, which were painted from observation through the window of her studio, reflect Plimack Mangold's lifelong interest in nature. The trees enabled her to continue her interest in abstraction, the problem of space, and the struggle to accurately represent it.

**GALLERY 3** presents a selection of works by Carey Young including *Obsidian Contract* (2010); *Report of the Legal Subcommittee* (2010); and *Contracting Universe* (2010); along with two new photographs *Faculty of Law, Oxford University* (2022) and *Prison Yard, Beveren, Belgium* (2022). *Contracting Universe* is a large-scale print applied directly to the gallery wall, depicting a digital rendering by NASA of the surface of Mars. The work has a magnitude or intensity that evokes the sublime, while at the same time suggesting a certain poetic futility inherent in the human desire to comprehend or manage the infinite. *Report of the Legal Subcommittee* is a framed print featuring a celestial map combined with a found transcription of a United Nations meeting, in which various international delegations declared frustration with their 40-year-old efforts to devise a legal definition of outer space. The exhibition also debuts two new photographic works by Young. These photographs document a noticeboard in the Law department of Oxford University and a section of wall in the exercise yard of a prison in Belgium. The images have been captured in such a way by the artist that they fool us into thinking they are images of the night sky or astrological charts of some kind. One black and one white, they echo and reverse one another in aesthetic terms. But the images also have a dialectical tension, a darkness, obscurity, privation, in which the role of a law schools in constructing the criminal justice system is placed alongside the day-to-day functioning of a prison, posing questions about the complex relationship between the two. **In 2023, Young will have a solo show at Modern Art Oxford.**

*On Hannah Arendt: The Conquest of Space* is the final part in the gallery's year-long program dedicated to the writings of the German-born, American political philosopher Hannah Arendt, which takes its title from the eight chapter of her 1968 book *Between Past and Future*. Accompanying the programming is a new series of sound pieces by Brazilian artist and musician **Laima LEYTON**, who responds to each essay in Arendt's book *Between Past and Future*. Collectively titled *Infinite past, infinite future and NOW*, the works are available to experience via 'Saltoun Online' on the gallery's website.

A video introduction to 'The Conquest of Space' by **Roger Berkowitz**, academic director of the Hannah Arendt Center at Bard College, is available to watch on the gallery's website.

In partnership with the **Hannah Arendt Center for Politics and Humanities at Bard College**, a wide-ranging public program of online talks, interviews, lectures, and a virtual reading group is available to view on the gallery's website.

**With special thanks to the artists, Alexander and Bonin, Paula Cooper Gallery and McClain Gallery.**

A comprehensive catalogue including photographic documentation of all eight exhibitions in the series and works by the twenty-two participating artists is forthcoming. It will include contributions by some of the world's leading thinkers dedicated to the writings of Hannah Arendt. Edited and with a text by Gavin Delahunty, contributors include Seyla Benhabib, Columbia University; Roger Berkowitz, Bard College; Judith Butler, The University of California, Berkeley; Martin Jay, University of California, Berkeley; Ken Krimstein, The New Yorker Magazine; Ann Lauterbach, Bard College; Shai Lavi, Tel Aviv University, Griselda Pollock, University of Leeds; and Lyndsey Stonebridge, University of Birmingham.

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Image: Carey YOUNG, *Contracting Universe*, 2010

## Notes to editors:

Founded in 2012, **Richard Saltoun Gallery** is based in Mayfair, London, and Via Margutta, Rome. The gallery specializes in contemporary art, with an emphasis on feminist, conceptual and performance artists from the 1960s onwards. It is guided by a strong focus on rediscovering the work of important yet under-recognized artists through presentations at its central location in Dover Street, a series of online exhibitions, and participation in art fairs around the world. The gallery is considered a leader in its representation of female artists, from avant-garde pioneers of the 1960s and 1970s, such as Eleanor ANTIN, Renate BERTLMANN and Gina PANE, to a mid-career generation including BRACHA (L ETTINGER), Vivienne KOORLAND and Evelyn NICODEMUS and a younger generation of female artists including Silvia GIAMBRONE and Marinella SENATORE. Additionally, Richard Saltoun Gallery is noted for its support of pioneering artists who have pushed the conceptual and disciplinary boundaries in which they work, from LI Yuan-chia, one of the earliest proponents of abstract and conceptual art in Taiwan, to ULAY, the late photographer and performance artist, as well as British artists Victor BURGIN, Rose ENGLISH, Peter KENNARD, BOB LAW, Penny SLINGER and more. The gallery also preserves the legacy of artists through its representation of artist estates, including Helen CHADWICK, David HALL, Alexis HUNTER, Bob LAW, Bice LAZZARI, Marinella PIRELLI, Jo SPENCE, Barbara LEVITTOUX-ŚWIDERSKA and Shelagh WAKELY, among others.

**Sylvia PLIMACK MANGOLD** (b. 1938, New York) graduated from Yale University School of Art (BFA, 1961) after studying at Cooper Union. She lives and works in Washingtonville, New York. The artist began exhibiting her paintings in the late 1960s and her work has been the subject of more than thirty solo exhibitions, including three museum surveys each accompanied by a monograph: Madison Art Center (1982), Wesleyan University and University of Michigan (1992), and Albright-Knox Art Gallery (1994). "Solitaire," a 2008 exhibition at the Wexner Center for the Arts, included approximately twenty paintings by Plimack Mangold in juxtaposition with bodies of work by Lee Lozano and Joan Semmel. A solo exhibition of her work was shown at Alexander and Bonin, New York in the Spring of 2012. Many of Plimack Mangold's paintings are included in permanent museum collections including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Brooklyn Museum, New York; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo; Art Institute of Chicago; Dallas Museum of Art; Detroit Institute of Art; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Indianapolis Museum of Art; Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City; Milwaukee Art Museum; Minneapolis Institute of Art; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Salt Lake City; Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts, Stanford University; and Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland.

**Elaine REICHEK** (b. 1943, Brooklyn, NY, US) has been working on a critical and feminist reading of historical texts and images, for more than four decades. The analytical engagement with narratives from myth and literature, and the reflection on their social function as a medium of cultural cohesion, run through the artist's oeuvre. Reichek employs a wide variety of media and engages works of art and literature from all eras in creative dialogue. Textile techniques such as embroidery and knitting as well as conceptual methods, photography, and various printing processes have been central to her practice since the 1970s. Elaine Reichek lives and works in New York. She received a BA from Brooklyn College and a BFA from Yale University and has exhibited extensively since the mid-1970s in the United States and abroad. She has had solo exhibitions at Secession, Vienna; the Jewish Museum, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels; the Tel Aviv Museum; the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio; Stichting De Appel, Amsterdam; and the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin. Her work is in the collections of New York's Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum, Jewish Museum, Museum of Arts and Design, and Brooklyn Museum; Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Museum, Philadelphia; the Norton Museum of Art, Palm Beach, Florida; the Spencer

Museum of Art, University of Kansas; and the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin, among others. Reichek's work was included in *Art\_Textiles* at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, UK, in 2015; *Art/Histories* at the Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, in 2014; the 2012 São Paulo Biennial in Brazil; the 2012 Whitney Biennial; and the Cheongju International Craft Biennale 2011 in Korea. Her work is also presently on view in *Making Knowing: Craft in Art, 1950–2019*, at the Whitney Museum of American Art, until February 2022. McClain Gallery presented a solo survey of the artist's work in 2020 entitled *Between the Needle and the Book*.

**Carey YOUNG** (b. in Lusaka, Zambia, 1970) developed her artistic practice from a cross-fertilization of disciplines including law, business, politics and science. The tools and language of these different fields act as material for her installations, performances, text works and photographs, as well as for videos in which absurd relationships develop between the performer or subjects, and the rhetoric of political, commercial or legal discourse. Recently, she has explored relations between law, gender and the cinematic, most notably with the video installation *Palais de Justice* (2017), in which the artist surreptitiously filmed female judges working at the main courthouse of Belgium.

Young's work has been exhibited widely, including solo shows at Kunsthall Aarhus, Aarhus, Denmark (2020), La Loge, Brussels (2019), Towner Art Gallery (2019), Dallas Museum of Art (2017), Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich (2013), The Power Plant, Toronto (2009), Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (2009), Eastside Projects (Birmingham, 2009), MiMA (Middlesbrough, 2010), John Hansard Gallery (Southampton, 2001) and group shows at Kanal Centre Pompidou, Brussels (2018), Aspen Art Museum (2016), Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (2015), Tate Liverpool (2014-15), San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2012), New Museum, New York (2011), Tate Britain (2009–10), ICA (London, 2003), The Photographers' Gallery (London, 1999) amongst many others. She has participated in numerous biennials, including Moscow (2013, 2007), Taipei (2010), Sharjah (2005), and Venice (2003). In 2023, Young will have a solo show at Modern Art Oxford. Works in public collections include Tate Gallery, Centre Pompidou, Sharjah Art Foundation, Arts Council Collection and Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst. Two monographs on her work have been published: *Subject to Contract*, published by JRP | Ringier in 2013, and *Carey Young: Incorporated*, published by Film and Video Umbrella and John Hansard Gallery, 2001. Young is represented by Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Carey Young has had an Honorary Fellowship in the School of Law, Birkbeck, University of London since 2013 and has given lectures at Harvard University, Princeton University, the University of Cambridge and Oxford University. She is Associate Professor in Fine Art at the Slade School of Fine Art, University College London.