

OLD LADY DRAWINGS, 1990–2020

GLADYS NILSSON

November 7, 2020 – January 9, 2021

Parker Gallery is proud to present its first solo exhibition with the trailblazing, internationally-recognized artist Gladys Nilsson (b. 1940), her first on the West Coast in nearly thirty years. Picking up where she left off with her last show in Los Angeles, the exhibition features three decades of works on paper from 1990 to 2020, together with recent, intimately-scaled paintings.

Known for her exquisitely rendered works in watercolor, Nilsson's compositions are populated with all manner of figures cavorting in exaggerated, often outlandish scenarios. The earliest works from the '90s play up Western themes, with characters donning cowboy hats and kerchiefs. *A Western Walk* (1990) features four figures with disproportionately large torsos, their hands busy handling rope that twists down towards a world of miniature figures at their feet. A shock of magenta ribbon entangles another character in *La Ree-ette* (1992), playfully circling up her arm and behind her back, lassoing a man's wrist to her left. A scaled-down woman in an exaggerated top hat coasts down the brim of his hat while animals topple over his shoulder.

Nilsson's scenes are often in the process of unfolding, teeming with worlds-within-worlds to create multiple narrative threads. In several works on view, the artist's subjects can be seen holding up a photo or painting a picture of their own. Outdoor scenes proliferate in this selection, featuring wild vegetation, dense mountain ranges, and large open expanses. In *Big Yellow Sky* (2000), a seated woman in an ambiguous room pulls back a wall to reveal a vibrant yellow landscape, while a love drunk couple adoringly looks on from above.

Recent works in acrylic—tondo and square-format compositions—employ the same level of playfulness and ingenuity as her works in watercolor, but are distinctly pared down, with a few figures at most. *Tranquil* (2019) depicts a sun-kissed, aquamarine scene with a pair of blue-toned people idling in the water and a third figure blissfully basking under the sun. Transparent and matte circles abound, playfully echoing the circular shape of the canvas. In a suite of mixed-media works on paper made this year, a giant female nude contorts her body in and around active arrangements of collaged people, places, and objects, joyfully colliding with art-historical references.

Gladys Nilsson (b. 1940 in Chicago, IL) lives and works in Chicago, IL. In 1973, the artist was among the first women to have a solo exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Since then, her work has been exhibited widely. Recent solo exhibitions include *Out of This World*, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Madison, WI

(2020); *Honk! Fifty Years of Painting*, Matthew Marks, Garth Greenan Gallery, New York, NY (2020); and *New Work*, Rhona Hoffman Gallery, Chicago, IL (2019). Recent group exhibitions include *Drawing 2020*, Gladstone Gallery, New York, NY (2020); *Landscape Without Boundaries: Selections from the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art*, curated by Dan Nadel, Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, Davis, CA (2019); *How Chicago! Imagists 1960s & 70s*, Goldsmiths Centre for Contemporary Art, University of London; *De La War Pavilion*, Bexhill On Sea, East Sussex (2019); *Hairy Who?*, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL (2018); and *Candy Store Gallery*, Parker Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2018).