
B I L L I S
W I L L I A M S

LOS ANGELES

BARBARA STRASEN
NOW and AND THEN

November 18 - December 23, 2023

Opening Reception: Saturday, November 18, 4-7pm

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Billis Williams Gallery is pleased to present BARBARA STRASEN: *NOW and AND THEN* - the gallery's sixth solo exhibition of work by the Los Angeles-based artist. *NOW and AND THEN* features Strasen's recent body of mixed-media paintings and continues through December 23rd.

Barbara Strasen's work walks the fine line between order and chaos. Her work seeks to make sense of the inexplicable, looking for ways to depict the disordered world in which we find ourselves. Her layering process utilizes seemingly diametrically opposed images - fabric scrolls with Albrecht Dürer's clouds, frosted donuts with scattered intestines, birds with neurons — combining them to create visual harmonies and reveal congruence and commonality between them.

NOW and AND THEN features Strasen's newest paintings paired with earlier works, illuminating the continuity of her layering practice through deep shifts of medium and subject. Tightly bound by an internal compositional logic, the paintings invite the viewer to dig deeper and unearth a multitude of possibilities and burgeoning ideas about the self and the culture(s) we inhabit.

The comic and serious walk comfortably hand-in-hand in Strasen's new paintings. The work exists on a razor's edge — a perfect balance between smart and humorous, mundane and highbrow, witty and poignant. We live in a state of contradictory emotions and experiences, and these paintings seek to make visual the complexities of modern life.

Barbara Strasen's work proposes that every memory contains multiple perceptions, layering themselves in some form of priority. Memories do not remain constant, but are the result of a continuing process of perception and re-perception - the mind trying to reconcile the sublime with the horrific, the trivial with the vital. Strasen is driven to make work that comments upon and re-presents these ideas, seeking to reveal the interconnectedness of all things.

Barbara Strasen (b. New York, 1943) received her BFA from Carnegie-Mellon University in 1963 and her MFA from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1965. Strasen has exhibited extensively in museums and galleries across the USA and Europe including the Whitney Biennial (1975), the University of Southern California's Fisher Art Museum, MoMA P.S.1, Long Beach Museum of Art, San Diego Natural History Museum, Grey Art Gallery at NYU, Islip Art Museum (New York), Het Apollohuis (Netherlands), Budapest Galerie (Hungary), Frauenmuseum (Germany), Galeria Soloblu (Milan) and the FlashArt Museum (Trevi, Italy). She also co-curated, with Mary-Kay Lombino (then Assistant Curator at the UCLA-Hammer Museum), the exhibition *Contempo-Italianate* at Loyola Marymount University's Laband Gallery. Strasen's work has been featured in the Los Angeles Times, Artweek Magazine, the New York Times, Los Angeles Weekly, Artcore, among others. Her work is included in numerous public and private collections including the National Gallery of Art (Washington, DC); the Wellcome Trust Art Collection (London); the Colburn School of Music Art Collection (Los Angeles); the Long Beach Museum of Art; the Santa Barbara Museum of Art; the Austin Art Museum; the Frauenmuseum (Bonn, Germany); the Allen Memorial Art Museum; the Blanton Museum/University of Texas (Austin) and the collection of Herbert and Dorothy Vogel. Strasen lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

VIEW EXHIBITION

Billis Williams Gallery opened as George Billis Gallery Los Angeles in 2004. Tressa Williams joined as director in 2009 and became partner in 2021. Billis Williams Gallery builds on the Billis legacy and shows emerging to mid-career artists with a special focus on Southern California painters. The gallery is dedicated to exhibiting exceptional work in richly varied visual vocabularies ranging from abstraction to photorealism.

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