

## EMILY LUDWIG SHAFFER & FRANÇOISE GROSSEN

April 29 - June 26, 2021  
Opening: April 29, 5-8pm

L'INCONNUE gallery is pleased to inaugurate its new permanent location in New York with a two person exhibition showing new and existing work by Emily Ludwig Shaffer (b. 1988) and Françoise Grossen (b.1943). With different mediums, both artists share an interest and background in architecture, an abstracted relationship to the body, representation of craft and a tangential relationship to science fiction. *Emily Ludwig Shaffer and Françoise Grossen* marks the first exhibition following the gallery's move from Montreal.

Shaffer views painting as a craft and explores ways of aligning her artworks with the disciplines of gardening, weaving, interior design, and architecture. Her grey figures can be perceived as stone or marble, influenced by garden statuary traditions. With these figures Shaffer juxtaposes emotions: refusal, boredom, agency and solidarity and seeks to bring sensual sovereignty over the body into otherwise cold spaces. The weaving motif in *New Fence Finials* and *Just Before Spring* (2021) references craft as a means to celebrate the ways in which women prop each other up.

Grossen meanwhile uses free-hand braiding techniques to create large-scale, fiber sculptures. With a spontaneous and innovative approach, the artist presents her textile works in varied and surprising combinations, seeming at once weightless and weighted, masculine and feminine, humanly and extraterrestrial; yet an overt insistence on their objecthood is ever present. In the *Metamorphosis* series Grossen began painting the rope, rather than dyeing it to achieve further three-dimensionality, merging the techniques of biomorphic and horizontal symmetry. Through a considered approach to materiality, color, and craftsmanship, Grossen's fiber works transform into seemingly solid, bodily, and architectural forms that speak to an imaginative future.

The pairing of the two artists presents a new context in which to view Grossen's work, reinforcing its relevance within contemporary dialogue. Shaffer shares: *"Françoise used weaving and fibers in a radical political way... to use a traditionally feminized craft to make some of the most important art of the 20th century that can be at once monumental, sexual and sensitive. I think it's important to pay homage to the artists who inspire you at any age, and it's an honor to be able to show alongside one of them. While Françoise has had an amazing career, I also feel her work deserves more attention; I was so excited to come across her for the first time five years ago but I was also upset that I hadn't seen it sooner."*

Science fiction by female writers, particularly works written by Octavia Butler, Ursula K. le Guin, and N.K. Jemisin, is of interest to Shaffer's practice and she believes that many of Grossen's works exist in a shared world with these - specifically Grossen's *Metamorphosis* series recalls the androgynous alien 'Oolio' from Bulter's *Xenogenesis* series.

*Emily Ludwig Shaffer and Françoise Grossen brings together the works of both artists in direct relation to one another's craft and representation, on view from April 29 - June 26.*

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**EMILY LUDWIG SHAFFER** (b. 1988, San Francisco, CA) lives and works in Brooklyn. Her paintings present uncanny and intimate spaces where architecture, objects, plants, and stone statues stand in for a void of living human forms. Shaffer finds inspiration in gardening and landscaping traditions, as well as Persian miniature paintings from the 12th-16th centuries. These traditions inform various decisions related to color, abstraction of space, and the use of architecture toward narrative ends. Shaffer sees the images and objects she creates as psychological explorations of space, light, and color, and as homages to the spaces women build and create.

Shaffer received a BFA in Painting from The Rhode Island School of Design, and an MFA in Visual Arts from Columbia University. Her recent solo shows include *From the Ha-Ha Wall Comes the No-No Dance* (Institute 193, Kentucky), *Wall-To-Wall* (PACT, Paris), and a solo booth at NADA Miami 2019 with L'INCONNUE. Recent group shows include *The Language of Flowers* (Reyes Finn, Detroit), *what fruit it bears* (Peres Projects, Berlin), *In Response: The Arcades* (The Jewish Museum, New York), and *No Place* (L'INCONNUE, Montreal).

**FRANÇOISE GROSSEN** (b.1943, Neuchâtel, Switzerland) is a Swiss-American artist who has harnessed fiber as a sculptural medium over a forty-year career in her studios in New York and in Southern Spain. Emerging in the late 1960s alongside contemporaries such as Eva Hesse, Sheila Hicks, and Lenore Tawney, Grossen sought to relinquish the traditional tools and methods of textile and fiber art. She utilized a large-scale, free-hand braiding and knotting technique, allowing for greater freedom and spontaneity in her process. Having studied architecture and textile design at Kunstgewerbeschule Basel and at University of California, Los Angeles with Bernard Kester in the 1960s, Grossen became keenly aware of her ability to bring fiber sculpture into unexpected and experimental realms: hanging from the ceiling, draped on the ground or over pedestals, and floating in bodies of water. Her work often appears simultaneously weightless and weighted, both masculine and feminine, all the while reinforcing their objecthood.

In 2016, a survey of her work was presented at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY. Her work has been featured in recent group exhibitions including: *First Light: A Decade of Collecting at the ICA*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA (2016); *Revolution in the Making: Abstract Sculptures by Women, 1947-2016*, Hauser Wirth & Schimmel, Los Angeles, CA (2016); and *Fiber: Sculpture 1960-Present*, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA (2014-2015) which traveled to the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, OH and Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA. Grossen participated several times in the Biennale Internationale de la Tapisserie in Lausanne, Switzerland, and her work has been exhibited in many large-scale commission installations such as the Embarcadero Center in San Francisco, CA (1971). Grossen's sculptures are represented in international public and private institutions including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Museum of Arts and Design, New York, NY, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Neuchâtel, Switzerland, and the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C amongst others.

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gallery hours:  
Wed - Sat 12 - 6PM

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