

Margot Bergman *Family Album*

For Immediate Release

June 26 – August 16, 2019

Opening reception Wednesday, June 26 from 6–8pm

Anton Kern Gallery is excited to welcome back Chicago-based artist Margot Bergman for her second solo exhibition with the gallery. In *Family Album*, Bergman presents recent paintings and, for the first time ever, photographs.

Margot Bergman (b. 1934) has sustained an active painting practice in Chicago since the 1950s and honed a peerless style of figuration. For the last 15 years her subject matter has focused on individual faces of imagined people, predominantly women. Her style is characterized by active expressionistic brush work, unconcerned with symmetry, realistic proportions, and traditional notions of femininity. Bergman can adeptly shift styles within a single composition, juxtaposing photorealistic eyes and lips, with a scribbly green hair-do, and a thin wash of color for the complexion, creating distorted beauties reminiscent of Dadaist collage.

Bergman's unabashed women, presenting themselves in varying stages of done-up and undone, gaze directly back at the viewer. Each of these poignantly human figures possesses a distinct persona, and therefore is named rather than titled. Paintings of *Isadore*, *Portia*, and *Liz*, while fully formed also leave an openness for each soul to wander.

Mingling with the ten paintings is a series of eight portrait photographs. The artist's foray into photography began with experimentation in her studio with an iPhone camera. While the protagonists in Bergman's paintings are conjured up from the artist's imagination, the subjects in her photographs are existing objects posed with materials she has collected over time. Having cohabitated with Margot for many years, these mannequins, dolls, and figurines have become her familiars.

With Bergman's eye behind the lens, she translates her painterly sensibility into the language of film or theater. She takes on the role of director, appointing actors and creating each peculiar mise-en-scène through consideration of costume, lighting, and camera angle. Through a cumulative viewing, these theatrical photographs bear an uncanny resemblance to Bergman's paintings. Examined together, this manufactured family album memorializes the environment in which they were created and their palpable relationship with the artist.

Margot Bergman has exhibited in solo and group shows in the US and Europe since 1970. Her work has been the subject of five solo shows at Corbett vs Dempsey in Chicago (2006, 2008, 2010, 2014, 2018), as well as a solo show at Anton Kern Gallery (2016) and Suzanne Vielmetter in LA (2017). She was also included in *Body Doubles* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, curated by Michelle Puetz (2015).

Her first institutional solo show in Europe debuted this year at the Museum Langmatt in Baden, Switzerland, and a modified version is currently on view at the Museum Folkwang in Essen, Germany, through June 30. The accompanying exhibition catalogue, with texts by Britta Peters (the artistic director of Urbane Künste Ruhr), Markus Stegmann (the director of Museum Langmatt) and John Yau (art critic and lyricist, New York), will be available at the gallery.



Margot Bergman, *Annie*, 2015, acrylic on canvas
48 x 36 inches (121.9 x 91.4 cm)

Gallery Hours

Tuesday through Saturday
10am – 6pm

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