

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 30, 2020

**Barbara Strasen:
Solo Exhibition**

February 27 - April 9, 2020



Opening Reception: Thursday, February 27, 6-8pm

BARBARA STRASEN

Susan Eley Fine Art is delighted to present recent paintings by **Barbara Strasen**, based in Los Angeles, CA. Strasen is represented by eight mixed media paintings on Yupo.

Strasen has participated in solo and group exhibitions, as well as in art fairs with SEFA. The exhibition opens with an Artists' Reception on Thursday, February 27, 6-8 pm, and remains on view through April 9, 2020.

Barbara Strasen creates imagery plumbed from the depths of a fertile imagination and a trove of rich memories, in combination with signs, symbols and pictures inspired by advertising, TV, film, signage, billboards, magazines, medical texts and other sources. No image is dismissed as banal or unimportant. It is all important to Strasen, in a kind of hyper-democratic reflection of the insanely complex visual world we inhabit as denizens of the 21st century.

Given this diverse source material, one might think that Strasen's paintings—acrylic, ink and collage on Yupo paper—would read as chaotic or unsettling. On the contrary, she finds the flow and lyricism amidst a complex layering of disparate imagery.

In the painting *Deconstructed*, Strasen seems to have taken a Rococo painting from the 18th century, shaken it up and re-dispersed its elements. The essential components of a landscape—trees, tufts of grass, blue sky and clouds—are rearranged, topsy turvy, with the figures from the narrative still largely central, in tact and attempting to finish what appears to be an afternoon picnic.

Grapes, flowers, birds, a modern cruise liner, a starfish, a pair of bikini-clad sunbathers and figures clothed as if they have stepped out of Fragonard painting, all inhabit the painting *Rococo Modo*. Despite the random, unconnected objects sharing space, harmony rules. With a

brilliant and intuitive sense of color, Strasen combines washes of shades that act at once as backdrop and connective tissue for the imagery.

In *Tide Tea*, a large black and white graphic of a stylized wave—reminiscent of Hokusai's famous wave—dominates the composition, replete with floating tea pots and beautiful silhouettes of birds, flying against a background painted with rich blue and deep red.

ARTIST BIO

Barbara Strasen was born in Brooklyn, raised in the New York area and lives in Los Angeles. She received a BFA from Carnegie-Mellon University and an MFA from the University of California at Berkeley. Strasen has exhibited extensively in Europe and the US since 1977, achieved numerous public commissions, acted as curator for several exhibitions and has taught at the University of California at San Diego.

Museum exhibitions include the Whitney Museum, New York; Santa Barbara Museum of Art; PS 1 MoMA, New York City; Fisher Museum of USC, Los Angeles; Islip Art Museum, East Islip, NY; Long Beach Art Museum, Los Angeles; San Diego Natural History Museum, and Allen Art Museum of Oberlin College, among others.

Strasen has recently been awarded a prestigious City of Los Angeles Artist Fellowship Award, and a recent large commission titled *Flow & Glimpse*, fills the ticketing and departure levels of Los Angeles World Airport's Terminal 2.

ARTIST STATEMENT

I am a visual artist whose work is about finding beauty and harmony in the turbulence and complexity of apparently unrelated and contradictory images. My perennial focus is on finding unexpected visual connections between seemingly unlike images and ideas, and to discover new relationships between them. The sources of these images are wide-ranging, from the anthropology of nonwestern cultures to the biology of neural systems, and from natural history to cosmology and the Big Bang.

Every act of perception involves multiple levels of awareness: the perception itself, memories associated with the perception, and associations invoked by these perceptions. These perceptions and memories layer themselves in some form of priority, and do not remain constant but are the result of a continuing process of perception and re-perception, the mind constantly trying to reconcile the sublime with the horrific, the trivial with the vital.

My art deals with this by using successive layers of imagery, both visual and physical. I have always been driven to make art that comments upon and represents these ideas, seeking to reveal the interconnectedness of all things.

Over time I have taken different approaches to manifesting this vision, pushing the boundaries of painting, photography and printmaking, and exploring other media to create multi-image works that reflect upon these layered complexities. My original artistic medium was painting, which has expanded to include digital artworks, installations, and lenticular works. The result has been a variety of work, from gallery-sized paintings, prints and singular artworks to huge installations for a building lobby and an airport terminal.