

A.I.R.

Apocalypses, Fables, and Reveries: New Paintings **Susan Bee**

March 18–April 16, 2023

Opening reception: Saturday, March 18 from 6–8pm

GALLERY I

A.I.R. Gallery is pleased to announce *Apocalypses, Fables, and Reveries*, an exhibition of new paintings by Susan Bee, and the artist's tenth solo exhibition at the gallery. The exhibition centers on paintings depicting figures—particularly women—engaged in battle with demons, dragons, and other beasts, inspired by medieval mythology.

Twelfth-century illuminated manuscripts and hagiography serve as Bee's primary source materials. Seven of these paintings playfully reinterpret imagery of multi-headed monsters taunting religious populaces in apocalyptic scenarios. Others show Saint Martha taming the fearsome dragon the Tarasque, and Saint Margaret praying beside the dead dragon whose belly she managed to escape from after being swallowed whole. In earlier eras, these figures were seen as icons of devotion. But in Bee's treatment, they transmogrify into prescient myth: their stories presage the end-time fears and social injustices that plague our more secular times.

The medieval-inspired paintings are augmented by canvases offering a different vision of how we might engage with nature and fantastical "others." These paintings feature witches and birds flying alongside one another across the daytime sky, as well as trees whose limbs culminate in eyes, hands, and other appendages. They imagine landscapes where friends might meet, or where humans and animals might find themselves in unexpected affinity.

As in her past paintings, Bee uses a mixture of linear and eccentric shapes, building up layers of oil and enamel in intensely vivid color. Blending familiar gestures with the unexpected, these works ask us to confront our present while paying homage to the past. The syncretic blend of the remembered and remade turns monumentality on its head.

Susan Bee will be interviewed by artist and critic Ann McCoy on *The Brooklyn Rail's* New Social Environment Zoom conversation series on Monday, March 20th at 1pm. The interview will be available on YouTube.



Susan Bee, *Apocalypse IV*, 2022, oil and enamel on canvas, 24 x 30 inches.

Susan Bee has had ten solo shows at A.I.R. Gallery in NYC. She has had solo shows at many other venues and her work has been included in many group shows. Bee has published eighteen artist's books. She has collaborated with: Susan Howe, Charles Bernstein, Johanna Drucker, Rachel Levitsky, and Jerome Rothenberg. Her book *Off-World Fairy Tales*, with Johanna Drucker, was published by Litmus Press, 2020.

Bee was the coeditor of *M/E/A/N/I/N/G* from 1986-2016. Her artist's book archive and the *M/E/A/N/I/N/G* archive are at the Beinecke Library, Yale University.

Bee has given presentations at the Whitney Museum, Reina Sofia, Brooklyn Museum, MoMA PS1, College Art Association, Queens Museum, NY Public Library, Parsons, The New School, Pratt Institute, School of Visual Arts, M.I.T., University of Pennsylvania, and at numerous other locations including in Paris, London, Amsterdam, Belgrade, Berlin, Portugal, Spain, Scotland, Israel, Cuba, New Zealand, Korea, and China.

Bee's artwork and artist's books are in many public and private collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery at Reed College, Bibliotheque Nationale de France, Getty Museum, and the Victoria & Albert Museum. Her work has been reviewed in: *Art in America*, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *ArtNews*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Artcritical*, *ArtSlant*, *The Forward*, *Huffington Post*, *Art Papers*, and *Hyperallergic*.

She has a BA from Barnard College and a MA in Art from Hunter College. She received a Guggenheim Fellowship in Fine Arts in 2014 and has had fellowships at the MacDowell Colony, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and Yaddo. She lives in Brooklyn.

A.I.R. Gallery is wheelchair accessible via ramp. There are accessible toilets in the venue. There is comfortable seating with backs. Free tap water is available. The venue is nearest to the F train at York St (0.2 miles) and the A train at High St (0.5 miles). The nearest wheelchair accessible trains is the B, Q, R at Dekalb Av (1.1 miles) and the 2, 3 at Borough Hall (0.8 miles). The roads immediately surrounding the gallery are cobblestone. The nearest accessible parking garage (for an hourly fee) is two blocks away at 100 Jay St. No ID necessary for entry. Please contact info@airgallery.org for more information.

