

PAULA COOPER GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1967–1980: Explorations

524 W 26th Street

January 10 – February 9, 2019

Opening Reception: January 10, 6–8pm

NEW YORK—A group exhibition of work created in the 1970s will open at Paula Cooper Gallery on January 10th, 2019, at 524 West 26th Street. The presentation includes work by Jennifer Bartlett, Lynda Benglis, Jonathan Borofsky, Elizabeth Murray, Joel Shapiro, and Jackie Winsor—artists who were central to the gallery’s program during the 1970s and many of whom continue to be represented by the gallery today.

Often referred to as “the pluralist era” of American art, the 1970s was a decade of broad and diverse experimentation. Alongside the continued impact of minimalism, conceptual art and pop art, artists explored new media and developed a variety of practices that sometimes cohered into smaller movements and at other times remained highly idiosyncratic. As the art historian Rosalind Krauss described, 1970s creativity seemed unlike the art of the previous decade in that “its energy [did] not seem to flow through a single channel for which a synthetic term ... might be found. In defiance of the notion of collective effort that operates behind the very idea of an artistic ‘movement’, 70s art is proud of its own dispersal.”

The works included in the exhibition suggest the richness of American art of the 1970s and focus, in particular, on an interest in process, material, and form. For Jackie Winsor’s dense sculpture of hemp, *Chunk Piece*, 1970, the artist tightly bound lengths of rope to balance bursting vitality with a meditative stillness. Similarly, the works of Lynda Benglis, including *Indian Summer*, composed of pigmented wax on Masonite, as well as her floor work of poured black polyurethane foam, reflect the artist’s visceral and acute sensitivity to organic forms. Elsewhere in the gallery are several grid pieces of baked enamel on steel by Jennifer Bartlett, using various dot patterns. Appearing as mechanically produced standardized units, the plates reveal the subjective touch of the artist’s hand and evoke associations with geometric stitching and number-based systems. Created in 1971, Joel Shapiro’s *Brass Forged Piece* is composed of twenty-four discrete parts arranged in a progressive sequence. Thoroughly enigmatic while asserting a matter-of-fact presence, this work, too, merges a sense of automatized order with artistic gesture.

The distinct painted works by Jonathan Borofsky illustrate the artist’s highly personal style, emphasizing the emotive and oneiric recesses of human consciousness. Of the artist’s one-person exhibition at Paula Cooper Gallery in 1979, *The New York Times* wrote: “the show is a three-dimensional acted-out diary, with last-minute thoughts penciled in the margin and the dreams of the night before dragged into the waking world The general tone—somewhere between conceptual art and late surrealism—is not like anyone else’s, and it is neither forced nor inauthentic.” Elizabeth Murray’s painted works similarly employ a more imagistic vocabulary of forms, as bright brushy layers of oil underscore complex biomorphic shapes with bulgy anatomical overtones.¹

The exhibition will remain on view through February 9th, 2019. There will be an opening reception on Thursday, January 10th from 6 to 8pm, which will coincide with the opening of a one-person exhibition of work by Alan Shields at the gallery’s 21st Street location.

For more information and images, please contact the gallery:
(212) 255-1105; info@paulacoopergallery.com

¹ John Russell, *Art in America*, November 1978, pages 155-156.