

Ruth's Table

Building Bridges: Breaking Barriers ***Part One***

Online Viewing Room
February 12 - April 8, 2021

Curator: Hanna Regev

Featured Artists:

Beth Fein
Howard Hersh
Liz Mamorsky
Joan Schulze
Corey Weiner
Keith Wilson

Image:

Beth Fein
Broken Painting Remains Unfinished
1987



Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers exhibition is a call for attention and an attempt to address the profound issue of ageism engrained in our society.

The existing biases of ageism are profound and represent a deeply entrenched cultural problem. New research reveals that over 80 percent of Americans who are 50 and older say they have experienced prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping based on their age.* The COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionately affected older adults' lives and livelihoods, not only helped unmask, but negatively fueled this already existing ageist sentiment, promoting the troubling narrative about the value of older adults in our society. From media coverage to mandates, to public policy and health-care decision-making, the older adult population is portrayed as uniformly weaker, less valued, unable to contribute to society. Negative attitudes and marginalization of older adults can have a significant impact on the health and well-being of older individuals, and have long-term impact on our society as a whole.



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This two-part exhibition series aims to help break barriers in perception by recognizing the unique agility and skill possessed by professional older artists at the pinnacle of their careers, their continued value and contribution to the arts and society, leading us to building bridges of an intergenerational nature.

The exhibition highlights artists who are particularly notable for their ability to transform their oeuvre in the thick of their careers. Each artist displays a selection of works that represent evolution and, sometimes, rupture from earlier works - much the way Philip Guston's career underwent a transformation from abstract expressionism to trenchant works of social commentary that became his defining style.

The work presented in the exhibition is vibrant, cutting-edge, and important, regardless of the artist's age. The first group draws artists from a range of disciplines, from quilt-making, drawing, painting, ceramics, to photography. Among them is *Joan Schulze*, a quilt maker who incorporates non-traditional, innovative and interdisciplinary practices, breaking grounds through experimenting with dying fabrics, image transfer processes, and collaging of materials. *Howard Hersh* has moved away from his signature two-dimensional encaustic paintings to create 3D structural works, an example of artistic expertise and skill. *Corey Weiner's* intimate portraits challenges the viewer to question their perception of age-ing by depicting "the self" as ever-changing and internally constructed.

Each of the 12 artists are at the pinnacle of their artistic careers and demonstrate a compelling ability to take risks, breaking stereotypes and shaping attitudes through their artistic practice. Curiosity, unbound imagination, and inventiveness are defining characteristics that only come with age. We have an opportunity to affect perception of older individuals from a "deficit" approach to an "asset" that stresses strengths and values their contributions by celebrating the expression of creative impulses. At Ruth's Table, we are in a position to undertake such a challenge.

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