

For Immediate Release:

SUE WILLIAMS

“Al-Qaeda is the CIA” curated by NATE LOWMAN

September 18 – October 23, 2010



303 Gallery is proud to present our eighth exhibition of paintings and drawings by Sue Williams.

Curated by artist Nate Lowman, Williams' first exhibition at 303 Gallery since 2005 is a retrospective spanning the last 20 years of her practice, from 1990 to present day. The show aims not simply to chronologize Williams' progression, but to contextualize her work according to the formal and topical arteries she has consistently cut through as an artist.

Williams' first wave of works echoed and argued with the dominant feminist aesthetic of the time, with a frank and caustic eye toward gender politics and the sanctuary of the body. In the years since, her focus has never waned yet her aesthetic interests have morphed and regenerated along with her subject matter and memories. In the work "Ballerinas Attempt To Rematerialize, Knowing They Face Technical Difficulties" (1991), the faded image of a mind is static, attacked by shards of the subconscious. Existing as a functional blueprint of all Williams' concerns as an artist: vulgarity, femininity, violation, loss, pride, dominance, and the overarching repetition of organic forms at their most innocuous and most sinister, the painting sits next to "Side by Side with Vine" (1995), an altogether more whimsical affair. Strewn across an off-white color field are chunks of dislocated body parts, topsy-turvy and abandoned. Hilariously obtuse and matter-of-fact, yet heavy with the gravity of repression, the painting treads the same conceptual lines as the earlier work, and includes the same strong sense of line, shadow and echo. Peaking ahead at "Pax Americana" (2010), the forms expand in their clarity, direction, and autonomy. They linger as evocative remnants of what at first may have been an overwhelming, impassible miasma, a distinct scene of carnage in war contrary to the title's implication of peacetime.

By the mid '90s, Williams began working in larger and more expansive fields, weaving narratives into larger memorial tapestries. The descriptive forms in "Darklight" (1996) intersect with one another, each story collapsing into the next. This reverberating nature of memory and interaction mirrors the complexity of everyday experience and develops into the tight calligraphic abstractions of "Red Flouncy (Go Team)" (1997), eventually evolving to the fluid abstract gestures of "Swinger" (2002). By 2005, the forms have completely overtaken each other, with Williams moving into a completely abstract mode, though a sense of the anthropomorphic is still present in "Bindweed and Red", an allegorical ode to a pestilent weed. 2010's "War of the Testicles" follows along similar lines, an intricate network of channels existing in comfortably hideous harmony. As the bulbous forms jiggle, spew, and rot into each other, the effect becomes singular. No longer does Williams have to comb through her memory for the sticky bits, she can illustrate a conclusive and all-encompassing conjuring of everything at once.

An illustrated artist's book created by Sue Williams and Nate Lowman will be published in conjunction with the exhibition.

Sue Williams began showing at 303 Gallery in 1990 and her work is currently on view in "Collecting Biennials" Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Her work has been exhibited internationally at institutions that include the Museum of Modern Art, New York, Art Institute of Chicago, IL, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, Vancouver Art Gallery, Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, Texas, Vancouver Canada, P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center, Long Island City, NY, Kunst Werke Berlin Germany, Kunsthaus Zurich, Switzerland, Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem, Netherlands, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France, SITE Santa Fe, Santa Fe, New Mexico. She has had solo exhibitions at the Carpenter Center at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; IVAM, Valencia, Spain; Vienna Secession, Vienna, Austria; and Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland; among others.

Nate Lowman lives and works in New York, and his work has been exhibited at the Astrup Fearnley Museum, Oslo, the Museum of Modern Art, Guggenheim Museum, Whitney Museum of American Art, P.S. 1, and has curated exhibitions at Gagosian Gallery, New York (with artist Adam McEwan), The Station, Miami (with curator Shamim Moman), Nicole Klagsburn Gallery, New York, and New Langton, San Francisco.