

En Masse - Ensembles, Sets, and Variations: The Art of Howie Lee Weiss

May 13 - July 29, 2023

Reception: May 25, 2023, from 6:00 to 8:00pm

Curator: Amy Eva Raehse

Image: © Howie Lee Weiss, Photo Joe Hyde

Goya Contemporary Gallery is pleased to announce *En Masse - Ensembles, Sets, and Variations: The Art of Howie Lee Weiss* on view from May 12th through July 29th with a reception held on May 25th from 6-8 pm.

One may look at the exhibition record of **Howie Lee Weiss** (b. 1953, PA) and consider him a late arriver, however Weiss is neither late, nor is he just now arriving. Rather, since 1979 Weiss has spent much of his time over the last 40 years influencing thousands of emerging practices as a beloved, full-time faculty member at the Maryland Institute College of Art. The rest of his time has always been spent in the studio, meticulously crafting his painterly, vine charcoal-based works that center around rigorously invented, stylized imageries of people, places, and things. **THEY ARE WELL WORTH THE WAIT.**

Placing his student's visibility above his own is admirable, but all along Weiss has been expanding the field of charcoal representation as a singular medium, influencing the up-and-coming artists who looked to his work for stimulation. The exhibit, *En Masse - Ensembles, Sets, and Variations: The Art of Howie Lee Weiss*, will feature a selection of new works that could seem like a bit of a departure from the artist's more recognizable, larger narrative *Wonder* and *Centerpiece* series. The later often pairs plants or fruit with birds and figures seen investigating or searching invented landscapes and histories in distinctive ways. In contrast, this new series of works explores portraits, removed from the exactness of our humanity, and replaced by amalgam hybrid models that celebrate the diversity among us within each singular image. In a second series Weiss explores the variant potential when considering specific landscape, rhythmically creating patterns from one image to the next in the way we accumulate the notes of a song—each note beautiful and seductive on its own, but more meaningful as they combine to create a larger ensemble.

In fact, the gridded installation of both series accumulates to form an almost symphony-like experience, a chorus of voices and a choir of trees that vibrate in the space, punctuated by the small bits of singular "notes"—the individual framed works that allow one to inspect and scrutinize in a different way than their congregated colleagues. The decision to leave the large ensembles unframed allows the public a rare opportunity to investigate the works up-close, uninterrupted by any physical barriers of framing, the way the artist engages with the works in his studio. One can see the subtle variations and gradients achieved through Weiss's painstaking, labor-intensive process. Here, a visual beat is formed, and then its variations repeat throughout the show, setting patterns in time and space that change in timbre and pitch, but are unmistakably the indispensable rhythmic element always present in the work of Howie Lee Weiss.

It should be said that Weiss's affiliation with materials, specifically with Vine Charcoal, is a major part of the success of his work. His atmospheric surfaces are acquired through an intensive effort highlighting the subtle, almost fugitive nature of vine [rather than compressed] charcoal. Whereas vine charcoal is often relegated to underdrawings, Weiss builds upon the surface over time, with increasing force and pressure until the surface achieves an almost velvet-like appearance. Each work reveals a glow that could only be accomplished from

the history of its own material application. Somehow in Weiss's hands, the humble, transitory quality of vine charcoal is hardened into a precise image that asserts elegant simplicity irrespective of its extreme complexity.

Howie Lee Weiss earned his MFA from Yale University and his BFA from MICA. He has exhibited his work nationally and internationally in New York, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Italy and Japan. A longstanding professor at Maryland Institute College of Art, Weiss also served as faculty in MICA's Summer Abroad Program in Italy. Additionally, he has served as visiting professor at Princeton University and was faculty at Chautauqua Institute. Weiss lives and works in Baltimore, Maryland.

Goya Contemporary is free and open to the public. Hours of operation: Tue – Fri, 10am – 6pm | Sat., 12-4pm by appointment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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About Goya Contemporary Goya Contemporary Gallery promotes the art and culture of our time, presenting ideas through exhibitions, curatorial practice, catalogues, print publishing, artist representation, and cultivation of collecting. The gallery builds private & public collections, assist in acquisitions, and facilitates auction activity. Goya Contemporary has earned international acclaim for its thought-provoking exhibitions, innovative programming, and unique collaborations with artists. Known as one of the most ethical, prestigious, and long running galleries in the mid-Atlantic, Goya is dedicated to scholarly programming, and promoting the work of mid-career artists globally and locally.

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