

ANASTASIA PELIAS

Across Space and Time (the Divine Feminine)

19 July – 26 August 2023

(New Orleans, LA) JONATHAN FERRARA GALLERY is proud to announce *Across Space and Time (the Divine Feminine)*, the fourth solo exhibition of New Orleans-based artist Anastasia Pelias. Her multidisciplinary practice and exploration of abstract gesture consummates this most recent body of work, comprised of ten paintings, seventeen works on paper, and a single sculpture. Blending the vibrant, compassionate nature of a New Orleanian with her weighty Greek heritage, Pelias creates work that is rich with personal depth of emotion and the spirit of exploration. Through a nuanced interpretation of paint, color, marks, and ritual objects, Pelias unapologetically explores the overarching subjects of life, death, love, sex, and the female experience.

Pelias expounds on the new works . . .

In this group of oil paintings on canvas, I am inspired and informed by my personal history and collective lived experience, as well as the experiences of women from mythologies, fairy tales, ancient and contemporary poetry, and feminist writings. I pay homage to these heroic warriors, healers, mothers, goddesses, lovers, leaders and poets, all of whom manifest the feminine on their own terms.

The group of sumi ink and charcoal works on paper, titled "Embodied", range in size from small to over life size. They are intimate, gestural, and immediate works concerned with mark-making both hard and soft, muscular and nuanced. The resulting images are suggestive of the vulnerability and strength of the internal and external female body.

ViVa, a monumental polyurea and aluminum sculpture, is an abstract archetypal form that encompasses the essence of the female. The sculpture lives in the present while acknowledging the near and distant past. ViVa expresses the energy, power, and potentiality of women; and also poses the question: What defines the feminine?

Artist and writer Lee Deigaard explicates . . .

Works reference plunging, being consumed, endurance, transcendence, and fury. They call to the body and compel the archetype as being visceral and real. Pelias' abstractions draw from and within the body and the movements of her own in their making. Her height and span of arms and hands, her language of marks and process from intimate to heroic convey a central journey from physical tribulation and trial, in myths and stories invoking risk of death or actual death, to a transcendence. How the female body, for too long, considered almost by definition to be domestic, instead spans the millennia in collective memory and atavistic recall, therefore traveling (and holding) time and space. Trauma is intergenerational and writes itself within our DNA but also links us to the powerful

figures who came before us. The archetypes here are not vague or generalized but embodied and within them derive healing and power.

ANASTASIA PELIAS was born in New Orleans, LA to Greek parents. She received a BFA from Newcomb College of Tulane University, New Orleans (1981), and an MFA from the University of New Orleans (1996). She is a painter and sculptor who creates site-specific installations in which she examines personal history, familial relationships, and human ritual. She draws from her Greek and New Orleanian heritage to infuse her work with her preferred subjects: love, sex, death, destiny, and the female experience. Pelias' work invites viewers to immerse themselves in the expression of her story, but also to examine that story introspectively.

Pelias has exhibited her work in numerous solo and group exhibitions at galleries and museums nationwide, including the McNay Art Museum, San Antonio; Ford Foundation Gallery, New York; Pensacola Museum of Art; Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans; Newcomb Art Museum, New Orleans; Contemporary Arts Center, New Orleans; the Louisiana State University Museum of Art, Baton Rouge and most recently Prospect.5 New Orleans. Her work is included in the permanent collections of the New Orleans Museum of Art; McNay Art Museum, San Antonio; Ogden Museum of Southern Art, New Orleans; Newcomb Museum, New Orleans; Mobile Museum of Art, Alabama, and in private and public collections around the world.

The exhibition will be on view from 19 July through 26 August 2023 with an opening reception on Saturday 5 August coinciding with the Arts District of New Orleans' (ADNO) annual event Fidelity Bank White Linen Night as part of the monthly *First Saturday Gallery Openings* from 5 – 9 PM.

For more information, press or sales inquiries please contact Gallery Director Matthew Weldon Showman at 504.343.6827 or matthew@jonathanferraragallery.com. Please join the conversation with JFG on Facebook (@JonathanFerraraGallery), Twitter (@JFerraraGallery), and Instagram (@JonathanFerraraGallery) via the hashtags: #AnastasiaPelias, #JonathanFerraraGallery, and #ArtsDistrictNewOrleans.