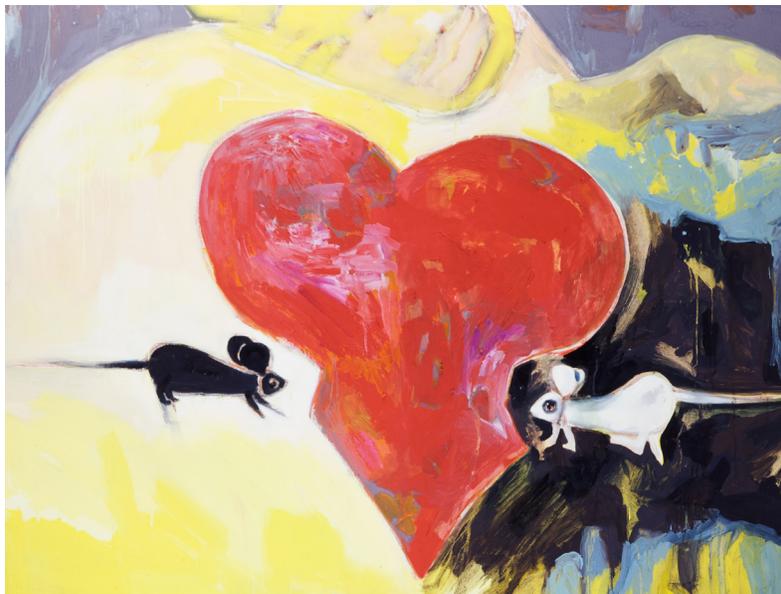


Mana Contemporary and ESKFF Present:
*Francesco Clemente, George Condo, Chuck Connelly,
Julio Galán, and Daniel Lezama in the Pellizzi Family Collections*

September 14, 2014 – March 13, 2015



Francesco Clemente, *Untitled*, 1995. Oil on canvas, 47.5 x 62 in.

JERSEY CITY, NJ, Aug. 7, 2014—
Mana Contemporary and the Eileen S. Kaminsky Family Foundation are pleased to present *Francesco Clemente, George Condo, Chuck Connelly, Julio Galán, and Daniel Lezama in the Pellizzi Family Collections*, a remarkable exhibition of paintings, on view from September 14, 2014 - March 13, 2015. A public opening reception will be held Sunday, September 14, from 1 to 7 p.m.

The exhibition, which is installed over three floors of gallery space, is drawn from the collections of the Pellizzi family. Francesco Pellizzi, an Italian anthropologist, co-founder and editor of the Harvard journal *Res, Anthropology and Aesthetics*, has written extensively on contemporary art, and lives in New York City. He

collected Tribal Art and artifacts as well as Minimal Art since the 1970s, but was later especially drawn to the so-called 'new image' (or neo-Expressionist) artists from Europe and North America (including Mexico) whom he encountered in New York City in the '80s. The work by these artists often resonated with undertones of mysticism, mythology, history, and even a surreal sort of romanticism. Of those in the present exhibition, Pellizzi acquired a significant body of work in relation to their production at the start of their careers.

This exhibition sees an unusual grouping of artists who have pushed representation to the edge by various pictorial means, and who share a strongly personal manner. These works also reflect the Pellizzi family's close personal ties to the New York City art scene,

in the '80s and following decades, a time known for a revival of painting, and the rise of art stars such as Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, David Salle, Julian Schnabel, and Francesco Clemente himself. As a collector, but also as an anthropologist, writer, and editor, Pellizzi was naturally able to connect with the work of several emerging artists.

Mana Contemporary presents the work of Francesco Clemente (b. 1952, Italy) in the sixth floor gallery. The show includes several large oil-on-canvas pictures and various works on paper that deftly combine iconography from various cultures and spiritual traditions, interweaving fable and metaphor, while pointing to a commonality of experience. Clemente's signature subject, the human form, takes on dreamlike qualities imbued with imagination, heightened awareness, and eroticism. "Clemente's own interest in the arts of traditional civilizations and the originality of his 'manner' and of his 'hand' deeply struck me from my very first encounter with his work," says Pellizzi.

George Condo (b. 1957, U.S.) is presented in Mana's fifth floor gallery with a selection of his early paintings and drawings that attest to the origins of his singular style. Pellizzi says Condo's natural 'facility' and virtuoso-like pictorial ability seemed to "almost run counter to the conceptual complexities of his 'neo-Surrealist' and 'meta-hysterical' imagination." Condo's carnivalesque collection of creatures are like studies in the multiplicity and absurdity of his perception of the everyday.

The exhibition continues in Mana Contemporary's first floor gallery with Chuck Connelly (b. 1955, U.S.), Julio Galán (1959-2006, Mexico), as well as Mexican painter Daniel Lezama (b. 1968). Connelly, known for his thick, churning brushstrokes, achieved a 'hallucinated' Neo-Expressionist painting style that made him known in the mid-'80s and is now being rediscovered: his work will soon also be featured at the Warhol Museum, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Around 1986, when Pellizzi learned, through Andy Warhol, that Julio Galán had moved to New York from Mexico, he made the artist's

acquaintance, acquired a group of his paintings, and promptly introduced him to gallerist Annina Nosei. Galán's cathartic paintings are curious amalgams of Surrealist inspiration and post-modern collage, evoking childhood memories, longing, sensuality and guilt, while also reflecting Catholic and pre-Columbian iconography and Mexican folklore, sometimes reminiscent of the inspiration of Frida Kahlo.

While Galán interiorized his journey of personal exploration and expression, Lezama, who belongs to a newer generation of Neo-Mexicanist painters, re-appropriates the stereotypes of Mexico's cultural and historical icons by turning them on their mythical heads. In the tradition of the great muralists, Lezama's large-format epic canvases, as well as his thumbnail sketches and stark portraits, can be seen as a sort of meta-realism, theatrically displaying a classical painting style, laden with provocative symbolism, but often also subverting it with iconoclastic results. Here again, we see that deliberate pictorial 'alienation' that is the enigmatic and unsettling thread running through the work of all five artists presented in the exhibition.

About Mana Contemporary

Mana Contemporary is a leading arts destination with locations in Jersey City and Chicago. Studios, exhibition spaces, art services, and programming provide an unparalleled environment for creating and experiencing art. By exposing and exploring the artistic process, Mana Contemporary offers an exciting way to discover and learn about art while artists are enabled to experiment and collaborate across all disciplines, forms, and media. Mana Contemporary is home to the Richard Meier Model Museum, Gary Lichtenstein Editions silkscreen studio, the Eileen S. Kaminsky Family Foundation, the Middle East Center for the Arts, Shen Wei Dance Arts, the Keating Foundry, and more.

For more information about Mana Contemporary, please visit www.manacontemporary.com.

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