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SK
Sara Kay Gallery

Sara Kay Opens Gallery in New York with Limitless Vision

By Katy Donoghue | October 11, 2017



At the end of September, Sara Kay opened her eponymous gallery on East 2nd Street in New York with the inaugural show “A Limitless Vision: The Collection of Audrey B. Heckler alongside works by Jean Dubuffet and Pablo Picasso.”

Kay activates the 19th-century townhouse (the former Rivington Arms space and home of Brice Marden) with an impressive group of over 30 rare drawings, paintings, and sculptures by self-taught artists, many of which are on view for the first time. The show pairs Audrey B. Heckler’s collection with delightful ceramics by Picasso and a large sculpture by Dubuffet from his “L’Hourloupe” series.

The gallerist brings to New York 20-years of experience—at Jan Krugier Gallery, Christie’s, White Cube, and elsewhere. Whitewall spoke with Kay about her plan for multi-genre programming.

WHITEWALL: You’ve expressed that you’d always imagined opening your own gallery, that this was always a goal for you. So, what does it feel like to finally have your own gallery?

SARA KAY: This is the start of a new chapter and one that I have been writing for many years. It is very exciting, and I am so grateful for the overwhelming support I have received.

WW: Can you tell us about the gallery space on East 2nd street? What did you connect with in the 19th century townhouse?

SK: I was dreaming of a townhouse, and I like to think that this particular space found me. I was drawn to the architectural details of the building—everything from the exposed brick columns to the red front door. It has such character, history and charm. Everything I love in a space.

WW: What kind of tone did you want to set with the inaugural show, “A Limitless Vision: The Collection of Audrey B. Heckler alongside works by Jean Dubuffet Pablo Picasso”



Photo by Tyler Stroh, courtesy of Sara Kay Gallery.

SK: The inaugural exhibition is a reflection of my background that spans many genres. I have long admired Audrey's impressive collection, and wanted to transport her extraordinary vision to the gallery and share it with the public. I am interested in fostering a dialogue between different tendencies and periods of art. I thought—what better work to show alongside Audrey's collection than the work of Pablo Picasso and Jean Dubuffet, two artists who not only found inspiration in outsider art, but who also helped propel the genre.

WW: The collection of outsider art on display is impressive. What is special about this collection of work?

SK: Audrey Heckler has shown an unwavering curiosity, passion, and commitment to outsider art since 1993. Particularly remarkable is the depth and breadth of the collection that includes both well-known and obscure artists from all over the world. Together the collection is cohesive and refreshing with many discoveries to be made.

WW: At the opening, I was told about a work made on of fabric by Madge Gill. Can you tell me more about this specific piece?

SK: On view is one of the largest works created by British mediumistic artist Madge Gill, an artist whose work Jean Dubuffet kept in his private collection before it came into the possession of Lausanne, Switzerland's Collection de l'Art Brut. She was compelled by her spirit guide to create work, like this scroll, covered in intricate ink drawings, which she signed "Myrninerest." It's one of my favorite works in the show.

WW: I loved the hand-painted unique ceramics by Picasso in the back room. How did you come to show these works? How personal were they to the artist?

SK: The gallery brings together my diverse experience and expertise. My personal trajectory informed the exhibition, as for many years I was the Fine Arts Representative for the Jan Krugier Gallery, the exclusive agent for the Marina Picasso Estate. The ceramics in the exhibition are all unique works, conceived and hand-painted by the artist. They were selected by Picasso for his own collection and remained in his possession throughout his lifetime. They were never intended to be released to the public and never appeared at auction. These ceramics were released through the Estate by various members of the family and sold to private collectors. They have rarely been seen outside museum exhibitions.

WW: What is your vision for upcoming programming at the gallery? Why is it important for you to show both historical and contemporary exhibitions?

SK: I've thoughtfully built my career over the past 20 years, which includes old master drawings, outsider, modern and contemporary art. I see the gallery as a natural next step that expands my opportunities to make a contribution and support artists whom I have long admired. While it won't focus solely on work by women, the gallery will place an emphasis on supporting female artists—it's no secret that I'm an advocate for women in the arts.

WW: Can you tell us a bit about the upcoming Natalie Frank show, opening in March?

SK: I am delighted to work with Natalie and exhibit her work this spring. The show will include paintings and drawings and will coincide with the launch of her publication, *The Story of O*.

"A Limitless Vision: The Collection of Audrey B. Heckler alongside works by Jean Dubuffet and Pablo Picasso" is on view through November 18.



Installation View, photo by Tyler Stroh, courtesy of Sara Kay Gallery.



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