CHELLIS BAIRD’S TEXTILE PAINTED SCULPTURES ON VIEW AT NEVELSON CHAPEL
EXHIBITION TITLED “MEDITATIVE MOTIONS”

Press Preview: Friday, November 15, 10:00 to 12:00; walkthroughs at 10:30 and 11:30

In “Meditative Motions,” Chellis Baird paves the entryway of Nevelson Chapel with her exhibition of sculptural paintings, on display from November 21, 2019 to February 20, 2020, at the Narthex and Living Room Galleries of Nevelson Chapel at Saint Peter’s Church, 54th Street at Lexington Avenue in Midtown Manhattan.

Baird’s work lies at the intersection of painting, sculpture, and textiles. She believes that through texture, evidence of the human hand, and the emotional sensations of color, the viewer can disconnect from screens to move back into the physical world. Much like the sculptural environments created by Louise Nevelson, from whom Baird draws inspiration, Baird transforms materials to celebrate the transition from the mundane to the sacred, using shadow and light to sculpt her own visual language of texture. The repetitive patterns in her work ground and invite the viewer into physical spaces.

Included in the exhibition is “Caress, Collide, Crescendo, Cambre, Chasse, and Coupe,” a series of six white-on-white works that pay respect to Nevelson’s use of white in Nevelson Chapel. The works explore how contrasting gestures intertwine or dissolve within themselves or together to offered moments of tethered relationship. Similarly, the use of vermilion orange in “Reclaim,” inspired by Baird’s visit to the Torii Gates and Japanese shrines, pay respect to other cultures’ sacred spaces and underscore the importance of learning and sharing among different cultures.

Originally from Spartanburg, South Carolina, Baird has studied at the Art Students League and Rhode Island School of Design, from which she received a BFA in textiles. Since moving to New York, Baird has over ten years of experience in sculpting the human form in fabric as a fashion designer. Her work, deeply rooted in the textiles of her hometown, has appeared in the 5-50 Gallery, the 326 Gallery, the Plaxall Gallery, and the Google Headquarters in New York City. A ballet dancer since the age of five, Baird has collaborated with choreographer Roberto Lara for a dance performance with Saint Peter’s dance program, Dance at Saint Peter’s.

Fostering the creative and performing arts is one of the longest continuous mission commitments of Saint Peter’s Church, a welcoming and diverse evangelical catholic communion nourished by God and publicly engaged with others in creatively shaping life in the city. Saint Peter’s hosts a rich collection of sculpture, textiles, paintings and fine objects including Nevelson Chapel, the only remaining intact sculptural environment created by the extraordinary Louise Nevelson, one of the 20th century’s premier abstract expressionist sculptors.

Some fifty years ago Elaine de Kooning began curating a gallery in the parish hall of the “old” Saint Peter’s Church. That tradition continues today in the recently-landmarked modern building with interiors by Lella and Massimo Vignelli. Baird’s exhibition is part of a program of rotating art installations alongside Nevelson Chapel, which aims to bring contemporary artists into regular conversation with the general public.

Galleries are open daily 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.; call (212) 935-2200 to confirm hours.

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