

Thomas Erben Gallery



Annunciation in NYC, 2016. Oil on wood, metal shard, shells and graphite, 25 x 17in.

Anne Minich

Her Bone

curated by Ezra Tessler

May 22-June 26, 2021

Opens Saturday, May 22, 10-6 pm.

Thomas Erben is delighted to present *Her Bone*, a solo exhibition with Philadelphia-based artist Anne Minich (b. 1934, Philadelphia). Bringing together drawings on paper, carved wooden sculptures, and three-dimensional paintings inlaid with found objects and text, this show centers on Minich's fascination with the human body. In particular, it follows the themes of sexual desire, erotic excitement, and pleasure throughout Minich's decades-long career.

This is the first exhibition to bring together a substantial group of drawings from across the artist's practice. Drawing has always played an outsized role in Minich's evolving work, as a source for probing dreamlike visions, developing her own personal mythologies, or paying homage to friends, family, lovers, and artistic inspirations.

Similarly, Minich's paintings are painstakingly made and suffused with a life spent traversing the human body's physical limits and subverting society's normative boundaries. Built by hand and intricately carved, these works are inlaid with found material collected either from Minich's wanderings or were given to her from friends both living and

dead. She also uses text as another medium for exploring the figure and articulating humor, intimacy, and memory. Minich's play with language and campy tropes reveals her kinship with Marcel Duchamp. Yet Duchamp is not the only connection to Philadelphia's rich artistic heritage in Minich's work. Her restrained formal vocabulary and concern for detail, for example, call to mind Quaker aesthetics.

The body has always been at the center of Minich's practice. Recalling when she first attended summer classes as a high school student at PAFA in 1948, she explains:

"I was thrilled at being able to simply stare at naked bodies with a perfectly good excuse to do so. It represented a sense of freedom I'd never experienced. The models had to pose for 25 minutes at a time, no matter what; a model got her period during a pose, had to keep it and then fled when time was called. The sight of the blood flowing down her leg was for me a thrill. Another time an instructor caused a model to have an erection (contained by a jock strap). He kept the pose and then fled when time was called. He returned in 'proper order'; I had no idea what I had just witnessed but knew it was eventful... I've not lost those fascinations and they are continuing to serve me well."

Minich renders the body with meticulous detail and careful craft, yet with an eye towards the messy and often transgressive possibilities of what it means to live and die in a body. The works presented here reveal the inextricable nature of longing, communion, transformation, decay, and ecstasy.

Anne Minich studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art (PAFA) before taking a step back from art making to raise a family. She returned to art in the late 1960s and lived in New York City until moving to Philadelphia permanently in 1983. Recent solo presentations include *Anne Minich, A Survey* at **White Columns** (New York) and *Anne Minich: Boat Series* at **PAFA** (Philadelphia). Her work has been included in recent group shows at **Gavlak Gallery** (Los Angeles), **Fleisher/Ollman Gallery** (Philadelphia), **Jack Barrett Gallery** (New York), among others. She has been an artist-in-residence at MacDowell Colony and the recipient of the Gottlieb Emergency Fund award, the Pollock-Krasner award, and the Distinguished Alumni Award from PAFA. Her work is in a number of public and private collections including the **Hall Art Foundation**, **PAFA**, the **Woodmere Museum**, the **Walker Museum of Art** at Bowdoin College, and has been reviewed in *The New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, and *Vulture*. Concurrent with her exhibition at Thomas Erben Gallery, Minich's work is included in a group show at the Villa Lontana in Rome, Italy.

Ezra Tessler (Philadelphia, PA) is a Brooklyn-based painter. He received his MFA in painting from Bard College in 2016. Recent solo presentations include *An angle to the place I live in*, **Tops Gallery** (Memphis), and *Recent Work*, **Good Weather** at MECA (San Juan, PR). His work has been included in recent group shows at **The Green Gallery** (Milwaukee), **The Landing** (Los Angeles), and **Jack Barrett Gallery** (New York), among others. He has been an artist-in-residence at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, the Elizabeth Murray Foundation, Ox-Bow, and the Workspace Program at Dieu Donn . Reviews of his work have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, and elsewhere.