

January 27, 2022

**Opalka Gallery** is pleased to present “Judith Braun: My Pleasure,” a solo exhibition of new work, on view February 22 through April 23, 2022. Fifteen paintings and a series of functional painted sculptures will be included along with two site-specific murals and one large photocopy installation from 1993.

Since 2003, Braun has been working with a system of drawing called “Symmetrical Procedures,” a practice guided by abstraction and symmetry, reflecting her philosophy of freedom through discipline. Braun says, “Working within this framework creates an emergent self-organizing system, where multiplicity finds order, the way cities, software and nature do.” The variety of bold black and white paintings in this show are evidence that her system produces surprising trajectories.

The paintings began during the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic, when her small symmetrical drawings began to reference her own head. She explains, “The images seemed to be asserting my existence, my fears and uncertainties. To capture that urgency, the small scale just wouldn’t do.” The resulting expansion onto large, unstretched raw canvas produces dramatic painted heads in the exhibition and captures the artist’s frame of mind. Wild eyes peer out, sometimes from behind a mask, sometimes crying or drowning. Despite the serious underpinning, there’s a buoyancy throughout; a kind of resilience pervades the show.

In related work, Braun uses her body as a symmetrical drawing tool, creating large, charcoal fingerprint wall drawings. She will be creating one of these ephemeral murals live at Opalka Gallery during the first week of the show.

Born in Albany, New York in 1947, Braun attended the Fashion Institute of Technology and began her career as a realist figure painter. After receiving her MFA from the University at Albany in 1983, she lived in New York City, producing a diverse body of work including photocopy wall installations. One of which, “Happy Bitch,” is included in the exhibition and reflects the long-running playful use of language in Braun’s work. Like many of her artwork titles, the show’s title, “My Pleasure,” is an example of Braun’s use of double entendre. Braun returned to her hometown of Albany in 2018.

Braun has exhibited nationally and internationally, including at the Indianapolis Museum of Art and the Chrysler Museum of Art. She has been invited to create many private commissions, with clients including the Bloomberg Foundation, Lululemon, Chevron, Mazda, and Burton Snowboards. Her work has been reviewed in the *New York Times*, *Hyperallergic* and the *Brooklyn Rail*, among others. She is a recipient of a Pollock-Krasner grant and an Adolf & Esther Gottlieb grant. Her papers are archived in the *Collection of Downtown New York Artists of the 1980-90s*, at the Fales Library at New York University. She is featured in a documentary film, *More Art Upstairs*, and was on Bravo’s reality TV show, *Work of Art*, in 2010. Her work will be included in the upcoming exhibition, “Eleven Women of Spirit,” at Zürcher Gallery in New York City in Spring 2022.

For more information, visit [Opalka.sage.edu](http://Opalka.sage.edu).

**Opalka Gallery** is located at 140 New Scotland Ave. on the Albany campus of Russell Sage College.