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PRESS RELEASE:

SUSANNA COFFEY: Crimes of the Gods

May 23th - June 29th, 2018

Opening reception:

Wednesday, May 23rd, 6 - 8pm



Illustration from from *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*,
1988, woodcut, 13 3/4 x 13 3/4

Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects is pleased to present our third solo exhibition of work by Susanna Coffey, *Crimes of the Gods*. This exhibition includes works from the 1980s, along with recent paintings.

Featured in the exhibition are woodcuts from Coffey's 1988 limited edition artist book, *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, utilizing a translation by Apostolos Athanassakis. The myth is the story of Persephone's kidnapping by Hades, the response of her mother, the goddess Demeter, and Persephone's ultimate resolution. The book was printed in letterpress, alongside Coffey's woodblock illustrations. The exhibition also includes painting, from the same period, that deals with the Homeric myth along with recent self-portraits, some of which verge on abstraction.

The 1988 book captures what Coffey describes as the "criminal behavior of patriarchs," which has a strong relationship to the current #metoo movement. Her woodcuts and self-portraits together reveal the modern experiences of women and their relationship to the several thousand year old hymn. In an essay that accompanies the exhibition, Coffey writes, "Now I see that the tale told in *The Homeric Hymn* is more of an ongoing truth than a myth and that all of my art has been involved with its lessons."

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Accompanying the woodcuts are several recent self-portraits painted from direct observation. The artist's representation of herself depicts more than just her portrait alone, but rather connects her to the stories and voices of women from ancient times and today. In an essay titled, Demeter and Persephone, Kia Penso writes, "Susanna Coffey's woodcuts...look possessed by the emotional energies of this poem: the sum of all women's anger the way the hymn is a sum of all of women's fates, most of those fates still hidden in its shadows."

Susanna Coffey studied at Yale University and is the F.H. Sellers Professor in Painting at the School of the Art Institute, Chicago. She is known for her self-portraits, and also works across the genres of still-life and landscape. She has been the subject of two other solo exhibitions at SHFAP, in 2012 and 2014. Recent solo shows include A Night Painting Project at the Anchorage Art Museum in Alaska, and Going to Ground at the Alexander Hogue Gallery of Art in Tulsa, OK. Her work is included in the collections of The Boston Museum of Fine Arts, The Art Institute of Chicago, The Indianapolis Museum of Art, The Akron Museum of Art, The Weatherspoon Art Museum, The Honolulu Academy of Art, and The Minneapolis Museum of Art.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalog with a reproduction of the original Homeric Hymn to Demeter accompanied by a new essay by Kia Penso and a text from the artist.

Please contact Lauren Fowler at lauren@shfap.com or call 917-861-7312 for further information and images.