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Press release:

Louisa Matthiasdottir: 4 Self Portraits and a Sculpture

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steven harvey fine art projects

208 Forsyth Street

New York, NY 10002

917-861-7312

info@shfap.com, www.shfap.com



SHFAP presents an exhibition of four self-portraits and a sculpture by Louisa Matthiasdottir (1917-2000), a preeminent painter born in Iceland whose practice came to fruition when she moved to New York City and studied with Hans Hoffman. Matthiasdottir’s figurative work is situated at the edge of abstraction, demonstrating Hoffman’s “push and pull” theory of painting flat color planes that simultaneously create the spatial illusion of depth.

Matthiasdottir is known for her open landscapes of expansive Icelandic terrain, but she also made remarkable still life and self-portraits. Here we present four self-portraits, each near life-size, and a sculpture that was produced in 2008. The sculpture is based on works that the artist made directly in plaster, that is too fragile for exhibition purposes. The bronze sculpture, produced in 2008 from a plaster of 1960, is ostensibly of Matthiasdottir’s daughter. The sculpture has been patinated white to relate to the original plaster. Matthiasdottir’s depiction of female figures, which extends to her large self-portraits, are human representation with a sturdy, clear, and monumental quality. Matthiasdottir painted her self-portraits with broad brush strokes with sections within the work that are independent yet interact harmoniously with the rest of the composition. Art historian Jennifer Samet describes that in her work Matthiasdottir “achieved a piercing portrayal of the subject with a sparing, broad touch. In Matthiasdottir’s work, “projection” implies her total comprehension of the essence of the subject – whether it be the sheep roaming through Icelandic countryside, an eggplant set atop a table, her daughter or herself.”

Matthiasdottir’s work has been in numerous solo exhibitions spanning five decades. Her work is held in public collections such as the Reykjavik Art Museum, the Hirshorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, and the Art Institute of Chicago. Matthiasdottir was married the painter Leland Bell. They lived in New York, where they practiced and raised their daughter, Temma Bell.

Please contact the gallery at 917-861-7312 or info@shfap.com for further information or images.

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p 917 861 7312 e info@shfap.com w www.shfap.com