

Keitelman Gallery

AMERICA

21.04 – 02.07.2016

opening 20.04.2016

6 pm to 9 pm

Tuesday - Saturday 12-6pm

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Participating artists: John Baldessari, Robert Barry, Alexander Calder, Barbara Kruger, Sol LeWitt, James Rosenquist, Andres Serrano, Frank Stella

The Keitelman Gallery is proud to present an exhibition celebrating its long-term relationship with American art. With this new exhibition, which brings together a number of notable works, the gallery once more highlights one of its principle approaches: a sustained focus on post war art and the major artists who are now recognised as being central to the history of modern art.

This exhibition offers visitors an unprecedented opportunity to discover the works of some of the greatest modern artists, whose work can be seen in museums around the world but which are rarely shown on the walls of Belgian galleries.

The exhibition opens with a large mixed media work by Frank Stella, who has recently been honoured with a retrospective at the Whitney Museum in New York. This work highlights Stella's mastery, with the intertwined brush strokes that, in the spirit of Pop Art, cross-reference a multitude of pictorial aesthetics. It is, ultimately, a commentary on the American art of the last several decades.

A magisterial black on black gouache by Sol LeWitt is a splendid mimetic representation in which the pictorial – or rather the graphic – gesture strains to merge with the surface on which it is fixed.

A hypnotic painting by Robert Barry opens the remarkable chapter of Minimalist art, the defining movement of the 1960s and 70s, which probed the notion of the void, an idea central to Asian art and culture and which American minimalists filled with their own fantasies.

Several large format photographs by the provocative artist Barbara Kruger are interspersed throughout the exhibition. The definitive representative of the movement known as Appropriationism, here she shows a series of repeated portraits of Marilyn Monroe, wearing a deeply ambiguous expression, the images layered with incantatory words drawn from both advertising and religion. These works plunge deep into the consumerist psyche, interrogating its most troubled aspect, and showing how the image can commonly be a source of both pleasure and terror.

One of the tutelary figures of American art (both Frank Stella and John Chamberlain are his heirs) is of course Alexander Calder, and the gallery is honoured to be showing one of his fabulous mobiles, filled with wit and levity. This piece resonates with the utopian ideal that is embodied by the idea of the United States: that of freedom.

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Amongst many other pieces that visitors will discover is a monumental piece by James Rosenquist, to whom Jeff Koon amongst other contemporary artists owes so much. This large-scale polyptych from 1984 is a mash up of fragments of photographs, reproduced in paint in minute detail. Its subject is the energy that is so vital to the idea of America, an energy that is expended in multiple activities, notably those that are turned towards the future (space exploration and the invention of new technologies, for example), and which of course consumes so much, at the expense of the environment. Rosenquist evokes the fundamental polysemy inherent in the notion of energy in a work that towers over this exhibition with its focus on what was once called the New World.