

EDWARD CELLA ART & ARCHITECTURE
8033 W. Sunset Blvd., Box 3000
Los Angeles, CA 90046

www.edwardcella.com
323.525.0053
805.708.5912

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Transcendent Voices Shahla Friberg, Mary Anna Pomonis, Aili Schmeltz, and Bettina Weiß

February 14 – 25, 2023

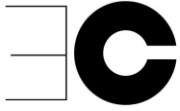
Edward Cella Art+Architecture @
Himalaya Club
1109 N. La Brea Ave.
Inglewood, CA 90302

Aili Schmeltz, *Cairn 24*, 2022, Ceramic with powder coated steel support rod and base, 53 x 12 x 12 inches

(Los Angeles, CA) Edward Cella Art & Architecture presents *Transcendent Voices*, a group exhibition featuring new and recent works by **Shahla Friberg**, **Mary Anna Pomonis**, **Aili Schmeltz**, and **Bettina Weiß**. Straddling between painting and sculpture, the exhibition features the work of four contemporary women artists who share sensibilities and inspirations yet explore distinct approaches to nonobjective abstraction.

Hailing from Germany, Sweden and California, the artists featured in the exhibition have developed independent practices that correlate to an expanding zeitgeist fueled by the reexamination of the work of pioneering painters like **Hilma af Klint** (1862-1944), the once little-known Swedish painter and modernist pioneer, **Agnes Pelton** (1881-1961) and others associated with the **Transcendental Painting Group**. These reinvestigations have captivated popular audiences and further help explode the notion of modernist abstraction as solely a male project. Moreover, responsive to the existential and imminent threats in world of their own respective times, these artists draw from an introspective well of creativity and seek to connect with the spiritual power and transcendence of art. Blending mysticism and meditation; possessing a personal, sacred geometry; a spirituality unmoored from organized religion; and marrying senses to sciences and making, the artist's featured in *Transcendent Voices* reflect an syntheses very much on the minds of many artists today.

The gleaming and reflective glass sculptures of **Shahla Friberg** (b. 1978, Toronto, Canada) engage viewers with surprising vistas and visceral experiences of color and light. Radiating like beacons, Friberg's sparkling works alter the viewer's expectations and, by extension, perception



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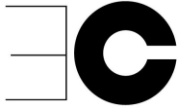
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itself. Having recently relocated from Los Angeles to a seaside nature reserve in the south of Sweden, a place that has an exceptional relationship with light, *Coronal Loop* (2021) is a unique hand-built construction made of mirrored glass and metal that projects forward of the wall and encloses a space for the viewer to encounter with multifaceted, reflective surfaces creating an optical experience suggesting vortices of space, time and energy. For Friberg, the urge to encapsulate the phenomenology of light and color in the world, as well as in memories and dreams, pulls her to continuously play with ways to manipulate perception, searching for the best possible formulation of a relatively unknown thing.

The paintings of **Mary Anna Pomonis** (b. 1973, Urbana, IL) utilize the language of light and color; the architectural forms of the surviving temples of the Eastern Mediterranean; and textile like patterns to create divergent, ambiguous queer pictorial compositions. The artist transforms the subtext of these sacred constructions – recognized as exclusively masculine, both in name and iconography – into paintings that zigzag and move with the motion of the body imbued with a sublime, ecstatic energy. Appropriating the steplike patterns of historical Italian and Greek embroideries called Bargello and Reticella which have inspired many contemporary designers such as Rosita Missoni, Los Angeles based Pomonis creates meditative objects that mimic the skylines of mountains and spires that vibrate with vibrant color, life force and spiritual possibility. Her paintings were recently selected by Michael Duncan into a group exhibition entitled *Transcendent* at Louis Stern Fine Arts, Los Angeles which ran concurrently with exhibition *Beyond Reality: The Transcendental Painting* group show at LACMA.

Intuitively drawing in the colors, light, and textures of the landscapes that surround her Los Angeles and Joshua Tree studios; **Aili Schmeltz** (b. 1975, Davenport, IA) inventively seeks visual expression through parallel practices of painting, drawing and sculpture. The exhibition, *Transcendent Voices*, features the artist's newest examples of the large-format ceramic sculptures which the artist calls, *Cairns*. Turning from the igneous black of the weathered buttes and rock mesas of the region that defined the first leg of the ongoing series; these new totems are made of interlocking stacks of hand-built clay elements and are fired with an unctuous green of verdigris glaze inspired by the Art & Crafts era potters like Grueby. Giving architectonic shape to the spiking plant forms of the landscape around her studio or suggest the flowing conduits of water these forms were first developed while at an Artist in Residence at The Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts during the summer of 2022. Drawn to the stories of historic visionary leaders of Women and environmental movements in the West, ranging from forest activist Julia Butterfly to suffragist and labor activist Maude Younger among others; Schmeltz likens these standing structures as talismans and embodying strength and resiliency.

Following on the gallery's debut exhibition of paintings by Berlin based **Bettina Weiß**, *Transcendent Voices* features a new group of works that are non-representational yet evoke cosmological maps, sacred geometries and radiating waves found in the power of the natural elements. Weiß generates visual possibilities for how abstraction might attempt to grasp the energy and complexity of the natural world – its magnitude and mysteries beyond language, but not recognition – in forms that are fluid, intuitive, or even magical.



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“As a painter I am interested in the inner geometry of nature, which is reflected in all processes in the micro and macrocosm, processes that represent the entire universe, the abstraction of forces and movements of nature. I paint shapes with vivid surfaces, which allow the painting to vibrate and thus open the pictorial space,” Weiß states.

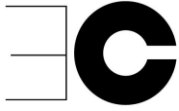
Transcendent Voices, follows a series of three solo exhibitions entitled *Berliner Fokus*, a new element in the Edward Cella Gallery program which introduces notable emerging artists living and working in Berlin, Germany through a collaboration with the Inglewood based Artist in Residency program **Himalaya Club**. Presented in concurrently with **Frieze Los Angeles 2023** and Felix Art Fair the exhibition highlights the work of these four women artists during a dynamic moment in the Los Angeles Art World. The exhibition will be open daily from 11 am to 5 pm Tuesday, February 14 to Saturday, February 18 and again Tuesday, February 21 to Saturday, February 25 and by appointment. The exhibition is installed at the project room of the Edward Cella Art & Architecture gallery located at 1109 N. La Brea Ave., Inglewood, CA 90302 and on street parking is available.

ABOUT SHAHLA FRIBERG

Shahla Friberg (born in Toronto, Canada, 1978) currently lives and works Skäret, Sweden. Her solo exhibitions include *Julsalong*, Höganäs Museum, Höganäs, SE (2022); *One in the Whole*, Marie Kirkegaard Gallery, Copenhagen, DK (2022); *Memory Palace*, Galleri Fredland, Arild, SE (2021); *Redirection*, Edward Cella Art & Architecture, Los Angeles, CA (2020); *Dreams of Forgotten Caves*, Solo Exhibition, Firehouse, Los Angeles, CA (2017) among others. Recent groups exhibitions include *Suggested Followers*, curated by Jerry Gogosian, Sotheby's, Manhattan, NY (2022); *Garden*, Ladies' Room, Los Angeles, CA (2022); *Everyday Reflections*, CG Gallery, Malmö, SE (2021); *Process*, Winston Wachter Gallery, Seattle, WA (2021); *All Tomorrow's Parties*, curated by Michael Slenske, Domicile (n.), Los Angeles, CA (2021); *The Re-Inauguration of the Pleasure Dome*, Group Show, Jeffrey Deitch Gallery & Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, CA., (2020), *When You Waked Up the Buffalo*, Nicodim Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2020); *The Stars Look Very Different Today*, with Christian Finne, Marie Kirkegaard Gallery, Copenhagen, DK (2020); Spring Break Art Fair, with Hilde Gallery, Los Angeles., CA (2019); Open Studio Soho House LA, Paris Texas LA Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2019); Galleri Lohme, Malmö, Sweden (2019) among others. She received the Swedish Arts Committee Grant in 2023.

ABOUT MARY ANNA POMONIS

Mary Anna Pomonis is currently preparing for a solo exhibition at Eastern Washington University Gallery, Spokane, WA (2023), Pomonis' previous solo projects include *Iris Oculus* at the Lancaster Museum of Art and History, Lancaster, CA (2020); and *Into Her* at the Nan Rae Gallery at Woodbury University, Burbank, CA (2018). Her work has recently been exhibited in group exhibitions at Louis Stern Fine Art, Los Angeles (2022); Melissa Morgan Fine Art, Palm Spring (2022); Ladies Room, Los Angeles, CA (2021); Site, Brooklyn (2021); Seer Gallery, Chicago (2021); the Torrance Art Museum (2021); Durden and Ray, Los Angeles (2019); Charlie James Gallery, Los Angeles (2016) among others. Additionally, her curatorial projects and essays have been featured at commercial and institutional galleries, such as the Vincent Price Art Museum, The



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Whittier College Greenleaf Gallery, PØST, Peter Miller Gallery, and Circus Gallery. In 2015, Pomonis and Professor Annie Buckley of San Diego State University launched the website radicalactions.com, focused on publishing writings and projects of teaching and social practice artists. Pomonis is also the founder of the Association of Hysterical Curators, a collective focused on advancing the lives of feminist artists. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Art Education at California State University Fullerton. Pomonis lives and works in Los Angeles, CA.

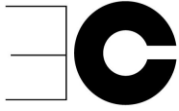
ABOUT AILI SCHMELTZ

Aili Schmeltz lives and works in Los Angeles and Joshua Tree, CA. She received her MFA from the University of Arizona and a BFA from the Kansas City Art Institute. Solo exhibitions include Johansson Projects, Oakland, CA (2022); The Landing Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2021); Edward Cella Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2021, 2022 and 2019); Espronceda Center for Art and Culture, Barcelona, Spain (2017), Grand Central Art Center, California State University Fullerton, CA (2013); Prescott College Art Gallery, Arizona (2013); Museum of Contemporary Art, Tucson, Arizona (2011); Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha (2008). Group exhibitions include Haines Gallery, San Francisco, CA (2022); Sarasota Art Museum (2019), Utah Museum of Contemporary Art (2019), Pasadena Museum of California Art (2017), Friedman Benda Gallery, New York (2014); The Hoxton Gallery, London (2014); Commonwealth & Council, Los Angeles (2013) among others. She recently was Artist in Residence at The Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts in 2022 and recipient of awards such as the Scuola Internazionale di Grafica Venezia in 2015, the California Community Foundation Fellowship for Visual Arts in 2013, the Foundation for Contemporary Arts Grants, New York as well as the Creative Capacity Fund Grant of San Francisco in 2011, and the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant in 2009.

ABOUT BETTINA WEIß

Bettina Weiß (born 1970, Flensburg, North Germany) studied fine art 1996 –1999 at Art University Kassel with painter Rob Scholte and 1999– 2003 at University of the Arts Berlin with painter and sculptor Leiko Ikemura. She received her Meisterschüler degree in 2004. Since then, she has had several national and international exhibitions of her work. She is a member of SCOTTY, an artist-run-space and non-profit organization in the Kreuzberg neighborhood of Berlin. Recently she was co-organizer of the Berlin based exhibition series 5 x 5 presented in collaboration with the U.S. based collective Tiger Strikes Asteroid and curated together with Daniel Wiesenfeld.

Recent solo exhibitions include *Cosme*, Edward Cella Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2022); the public installation *Unter der Sonne*, organized by A Trans, Berlin, Germany (2021); *Bettina Weiß*, Space MM, Seoul, South Korea (2019); *Misty Molecules*, Semjon Contemporary, Berlin, Germany (2018), *Fragments of a Magic Garden*, Gallery Bundo, Daegu, South Korea (2018); among others. Her group exhibitions include *Here and Now* at Monte Vista Projects (2022) as part of a B-LA CONNECT; *J+1*, Galerie Jarmuschek + Partner, Berlin (2022); *Reset to Start*, Semjon Contemporary, Berlin (2022); *A Faint Ground*, HilbertRaum, Berlin (2022); *Obsolete*, nationalmuseum, Berlin (2022); *NOMAD*, Torrance Art Museum (2021); *North Over Sea*, Kunsthalle Wilhelmshaven, Germany; *Schimmer*, Kunstverein Neukölln, Berlin (2019); *Lebenswege* (Rob



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Scholte class), Kasseler Kunstverein (Fridericianum), Kassel (2018) and *co/lab III*, Torrance Art Museum (2018); Her works are held in the Public Collections of Sammlung Landesbank Baden-Württemberg, Germany and many private collections. Weiß is represented by Semjon Contemporary and currently lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

ABOUT HIMALAYA CLUB

Located in Inglewood, California and presented in the studio of artist Lucas Reiner, Himalaya Club is an ongoing collaborative project providing space for local and out of town artists to introduce their work to audiences in Southern California through exhibitions. Himalaya Club has hosted artists from Rome, London, Berlin, Vienna, Warsaw, Lviv, and Rapid City, South Dakota. Works by Johannes Spalt, Agata Bogacka, Fabian Cereijido, Michael Dressel, Thomas Kratz, Francesco Siqueiros, and Marty Two Bulls, among others, have been shown. Located in Inglewood, California and presented in the studio of artist Lucas Reiner, Himalaya Club is an ongoing collaborative project providing space for local and out of town artists to introduce their work to audiences in Southern California through exhibitions. Himalaya Club has hosted artists from Rome, London, Berlin, Vienna, Warsaw, Lviv, and Rapid City, South Dakota. Works by Johannes Spalt, Agata Bogacka, Fabian Cereijido, Michael Dressel, Thomas Kratz, Francesco Siqueiros, and Marty Two Bulls, among others, have been shown.

ABOUT EDWARD CELLA ART & ARCHITECTURE

Edward Cella Art & Architecture is committed to supporting significant established, mid-career, and emerging artists, architects, and designers. Nurturing this hybridity, the gallery uniquely exhibits photography, painting, sculpture, architectural drawings, models, and design objects with an emphasis on the intersection of these disciplines. Founded in 2006, building on Celle's background as an architectural historian with a decade of experience in art advisory and collection management and a passion for collecting architectural drawings and ephemera, as well as contemporary art and erotica. The gallery sustains a curatorial emphasis on discourses surrounding issues of cultural and conceptual significance and has represented historical and under-recognized estates and collections.

For Further Information, please contact:
Edward Cella - director@edwardcella.com - 323.525.0053