

For Immediate Release: New York - May 19, 2016



## ***Dive In - Making a Splash this Summer in the Bronx***

Elisa Contemporary Art presents ***Dive In***. ***Dive In*** plunges into the Summer Season with underwater swimmers, poolside scenes, and water and beach-inspired artwork. Featured artists are: **Hawaii artist Carol Bennett, Marfa artist Martha Hughes, San Francisco Minimalist Jeffrey Palladini, Hyperrealist, Matt Story and Mixed Media artist Mark Van Wagner**. The exhibit will open on May 26th and run through October 6.

While each artwork communicates a playful summer vacation feel, there is deeper meaning and significance for each of our artists. Each has a different relationship and significance for focusing on water and the surrounding areas. For Story, water serves as a metaphor for “a deeper self-birth, cleansing and baptism.” Bennett uses water as a meditative journey through space and life. For Van Wagner, the use of sand -- collected from around the world -- represents the impermanence of people and place. The Water and Swimming pools in the artwork by Palladini symbolize both calm, as well as a deep sensuality and intimacy.

We will be debuting a new Pool series by Martha Hughes. The colors and shapes are intended to welcome and invite the viewer to jump in and become immersed in this vibrant world. According to Hughes, “*Paintings in the Scenes series are of everyday, prosaic interiors and landscapes, with ambiguous, vertiginous spaces that reflect my sense of never being quite at home in the world. The look of this series was initially partly influenced by children’s tempera paintings – colorful, flat and simple. I often find inspiration from glossy interior design and architecture magazines, with their carefully staged photographs of impossibly pristine, beautiful houses, gardens, and pools.*”

The exhibit will also feature Palladini’s video series – combining painting and video. According to Palladini, “*The conceptual underpinning of these works is the duality between stillness and motion, the passive and the active, and the tension created between the two. The painted figures in the foregrounds physically occupy our tangible world, but are inert, motionless while the world moves on without them. They are passive in the truest sense, helpless or unwilling to effect events unspooling around them. These works are paintings. Though video plays a critical role in them, they should not be thought of as electronic works, or video art. They are intentionally constructed to behave like paintings – two-dimensional and wall-hanging. They are intended to function as complete paintings even when the video is not running.*”

### **What: Dive In**

Artists: Kaua’i artist **Carol Bennett**, Marfa artist **Martha Hughes**, San Francisco Minimalist **Jeffrey Palladini**, Hyperrealist **Matt Story** and Mixed Media artist **Mark Van Wagner**.

When: **May 26 – October 6** (by appointment only in August)

Special Event: **Closing Reception**, Thursday, October 6 6-8pm

Where: Elisa Contemporary Art, 5622 Mosholu Avenue, Riverdale NY 10471

Hours: Thursday, 12-5pm and by appointment

### **About the Artists:**

#### **Carol Bennett**

She is a native of Los Angeles, who has spent the last 20 years living in Hawaii in Kaua’i. She spends all of her time surrounded by water, and a great deal within it. Her work is a meditative journey through both the water and through life. She is intrigued by how life continues to flow and change, being both in the moment and timeless. The viewer will experience being in a state “flow” – where the currents of the ocean suspend life and self, and the unexpected floats to the surface.

Carol’s fascination with the swimmer imagery began when she was living in Los Angeles and swimming at the LA Athletic Club. According to Carol, “*The floor beneath the pool, with its ethereal skylight, was an underwater observation room...used by Olympic coaches in the 1920’s. I would feel like a voyeur, watching the swimmer’s private time and drawing in their beauty. I became the swimmer I observed in the images I later created.*”

Her work has been featured in many solo and group exhibits throughout the US. Carol has created a number of public art commissions worldwide including "Water as a Point of Departure" for the Nawiiwili Harbor in Oahu and a 48' x 8' photovoltaic glass canopy for the Hawai'i State Art Museum Sculpture Garden. Her work is in numerous public and private collections including The Contemporary Museum of Art (Hawaii) and The Persis Collection of Contemporary Art.

### **Martha Hughes**

Martha Hughes lives and works in Marfa, Texas. She received her B.F.A. from the University of Texas, Austin. Inspired by the artwork of children and outsider artists, Hughes paints grid-based scenes using reductive, geometric blocks of color. She frequently depicts unsettling or impossible spaces. Her "Scenes" and "Setups" series, alluring in their ambiguity and bold use of color, reveal the contours of subtly vertiginous interior spaces. Hughes is also interested in the ways objects can convey atmosphere and mood.

She has been exhibiting her artwork since 1987 throughout the US including a recent exhibit group show in Sante Fe featuring her work alongside, Chuck Close, Agnes Martin, and Sol LeWitt. Her work is in private collections.

### **Jeffrey Palladini**

Jeffrey Palladini's unconventional portraits evoke feelings of sensuality and euphoria. While the San Francisco-based artist studied at California State University, it was in Florence that his true creative spirit was pulled forth from the beauty that surrounded him.

Now his modern figure paintings breathe life with vibrant colors and flowing brush strokes. Unlike many portrait paintings, Jeffrey minimizes the amount of detail and information allowing the viewer to gain intense suggestions of emotions in an instant. The simplicity is reminiscent of Alex Katz.

Palladini has exhibited his work around the U.S. and the world for over twenty years. His work is included in numerous private and corporate collections. Palladini was honored with an SFMOMA SECA Award nomination, and in 2013 was named one of San Francisco's Top 20 Artists by Asterisk Magazine.

### **Matt Story**

Matt Story studied art from an early age and demonstrated a unique skill for rendering verisimilitude, or hyper-realism. *"I was lauded for 'photo-realistic' technique, but I was never after that, really, after what a camera impartially sees, because there's so much more there, captured only by the human filter of memory. We all possess these invisible imprints, through experience and living, but often its only artists who can play it back for us, to remind us. The paint surface needs to be a mirror for the viewer, reflecting back not his or her superficial self, but a deep shared humanness. This is the essence of looking at a piece that's totally unfamiliar to you and yet, being awed with a sense of recognition."*

Story has worked for over twenty years from his studio in Los Angeles but in mid-2013 began traveling with his wife, first to Isle of Palms near Charleston, South Carolina, and then Santa Fe, New Mexico and New Orleans and now New York.. His method of oil painting on canvas and panel closely resembles the classical method, used for centuries by masters such as Titian and Caravaggio, two of Story's heroes, fastidiously building up thin glazes, painting "fat over lean" with traditional materials. His work is included in private and corporate collections in the US, Europe and Asia.

### **Mark Van Wagner**

According to Mark Van Wagner *"Inspired by drawing and writing on sand and watching the impressions wash away, one day I decided to gather the sand and use it as the "ink" on my paintings. Over the years, I have collected natural and synthetic pigmented sands from around the world, incorporating this substance into my layered-relieved abstractions. In my exploration of different types of natural and unnatural materials in my artwork, I have recognized sand to be the most profound symbol of decomposition – the essence of matter in the process of transforming. For me sand is the ultimate "natural" pixelation, a pointillist tool.*

*In my current body of work, I've begun to revisit and explore architectonic imagery while simultaneously employing the organic. Exploring material through process, I use spontaneous, meditative, calligraphic expressions to combine*


*movement with stillness. These pictures reference abstract sculptural signs/tablets or suggest micro/macro biomorphic/galactic collisions, webs, circuitries, building plans, sand boxes, waves, the figure, the inner and outer landscape and sometimes ... the inexpressible."* The multiplicity of thick and thin surfaces allow for playful ocular excavations.

Mark has exhibited throughout the US and is in public and private collections worldwide.

### **About Elisa Contemporary Art**

Elisa Contemporary Art represents a portfolio of both emerging and mid-career contemporary artists. Founded in 2007 by Lisa Cooper, Elisa Contemporary Art is dedicated to promoting the appreciation and collection of art as a way to enrich and heal our lives, our communities, and the world.

Elisa Contemporary Art has participated in international art fairs in New York, Miami and the Hamptons, and curated over 15 public art exhibits in the Tri-State area. A portion of every gallery sale is donated to charities helping underserved communities heal through art. We support Free Arts NYC and Art Therapy Outreach Center.

We have been featured in a number of publications including Ocean Home Magazine, Hamptons Cottages & Gardens, New York Spaces and The New York Times. For more information, visit the website at [www.ElisaContemporaryArt.com](http://www.ElisaContemporaryArt.com) or see us on 

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