

Margaret Curtis
Book of Hours

June 19 - August 1, 2020

Appointment Only Opening Preview: June 19, 3:00 - 6:00pm

Virtual Artist Talk: Thursday, June 18, 8:00pm



Tracey Morgan Gallery is pleased to present *Book of Hours*, an exhibition of new work by Margaret Curtis. The exhibition features painting, works on paper, and sculpture, many created during the Covid-19 pandemic. This will be Curtis' first exhibition with the gallery.

The opening preview will be by appointment only Friday, June 19 from 3:00pm - 6:00pm. To register for a time slot, please email info@traceymorgangallery.com or call 828 505 7667.

In *Book of Hours*, Curtis alludes to the highly personalized texts and illuminated manuscripts used in the Middle Ages—a time of deep social inequality, recurrent plague, and theocratic cruelty—to structure time and provide solace in uncertainty. We find ourselves in a similar moment. As advancing climate change whips up apocalyptic dread, the world, wracked by pandemic and vast structural inequalities, seems to be embracing a return to cultures of cruelty, where might makes right. Curtis considers the work in this exhibition her *Book of Hours*, the product of attempts to structure time through a daily studio practice, itself a meditation within compounding stresses of life during quarantine. Anxiety is a recurrent theme, as are culture-building, contagion, and climate change. There are several “portraits of my anxiety,” from a woman being swarmed by ants or swatting flies, to a dream of a house hidden within another house, a failed topiary, and with a nod to Whistler, a painting of a knitter literally tied up in knots.

Curtis' work has always addressed timely issues such as feminism, American consumer culture, misogyny, and power relationships. In *The Ice Sculpture*, a family tends to (or is perhaps hurrying the demise of) the rapidly melting and monstrous family patriarch. Curtis says, “The image came about after pondering the similarities between narcissism and its effect on the family structure and how patriarchal power structures operate within the culture at large, especially right now with a bullying narcissist in office while the climate doomsday clock ticks away. Society is a family.” This power struggle is also apparent in *The Falconer*, where we see a cobbled-together and somewhat pathetic wooden and chicken wire sculpture reminiscent of classic European portraiture of royalty, looming over a forest of stumps.

As we emerge from quarantine, and begin to move freely in linear time again, we might ask ourselves whether it is a source of comfort or despair that we've been here before?

Margaret Curtis lives and works in Tryon, NC. She received her BA from Duke University. Her work has been exhibited in the Brooklyn Museum, NY; The Andy Warhol Museum, PA; The Wexner Center, OH; among others. She was also featured in the *Bad Girls* exhibition curated by Marcia Tucker at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, NY. Reviews and features of Curtis' work have appeared in Art Forum, The New York Times, Art in America, Art News, Modern Painters, New Art Examiner, among others. Her work is in permanent collections throughout the United States.

For images, additional information or inquiries contact, info@traceymorgangallery.com

Image caption: *The Ice Sculpture*, 2019, oil, pencil, water color, spray paint on panel, 48 x 60 inches

TRACEY MORGAN GALLERY

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