

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUDITH BERNSTEIN

HOT HANDS

October 3 – December 19, 2020

By Appointment Only

Wednesday-Saturday 11-6pm

On this the fifth exhibition of Judith Bernstein, *HOT HANDS*, we are showing a grouping of ball busting political works. At this turbulent time, we've chosen to present works that empower and embolden and critique. As we reopen on October 3, 2020 by appointment only, we will present fifteen paintings from 2016 to 2020. We felt it of utmost importance to present an exhibition of paintings with strong political value. This Bernstein show portrays these psycho-political stories using large scale representations of the vagina and the penis; presenting themselves as dynamic, interactive characters in the power struggles of our culture.

Throughout her career Bernstein has become known for her large-scale drawings of phallic presences, until in 2010 when she began to bring painting back into her practice in a serious way. In the late 1960s she made a series of political paintings entitled *FUCK VIETNAM* (that were shown at The Box in 2011). In this series she made a portrait of a penis-headed governor; mocking corrupt politicians. Naturally this image has carried over into Bernstein's anti-Donald Trump paintings, where he is portrayed with a bright salmon colored penis head. Trump is portrayed as clown, with a court jester cap-and-bells accentuating his blond skullcap-hairdo. The image of the vagina face is integrated as well, engaging in potency wars with the penis heads. This image of the vagina face originated in earlier drawings from the 1960s with a character called *Fuck Face Sally*. The image has taken on new life since 2010 in a series entitled *Birth of the Universe*, where Bernstein makes the connection between human birth and the birth of the universe. A new work in the exhibition, *Gaslighting* (2019), depicts a battle between vaginas and penises, with glowing shafts of neon yellow radiating under black light to a backdrop of deep pinks and purples. This play in characters and continued explorations of bright fluorescent tones, reveal in part an exploration of Bernstein's inner processing of the deeply complex psychological and cultural issues she addresses in the work.

This exhibition features some of the largest paintings Bernstein has ever created, one measuring over 12 by 14 feet, creating an ominous, overpowering presence. Her interest in large scale formats can be connected back to her early large scale aforementioned phallic drawings, such as her infamous *Horizontal* (1973). These historical drawings used their gigantic scale to infantilize the viewer. Bernstein was a founding member of the New York feminist movement. She employed scale, as well as sexual and political references, to embolden her female hand as a fully capable, fully empowered, artist of the time. The works from 2016/2017 focus on Donald Trump and his politically sycophantic goon friends from around the world, like Putin and Kim Jong Un, in the work *Money Shot (Blue Balls)* (2017). With the works from 2018, one sees Bernstein widening her perspective, exploring forms that are abstracted and make for a calmer visual dynamic. A stellar example of this is the work *Blue Balls #1* (2018), with a bright true carnelian yellow background with floating deep blue phalluses and eyes that hug the edge of the nearly 13-foot-tall painting. These works are playful and dark, humorous yet serious, political yet personal. They are the perfect works to experience during this COVID-19 isolation.

Judith Bernstein was born in 1942 and currently lives and works in New York. She received her MFA from Yale University in 1967. Recent solo exhibitions include *Money Shot* at Kasmin Gallery, NY (2018); *Dicks of Death* at Mary Boone Gallery, NY (2016); *Judith Bernstein* at Kunsthall Stavanger, Norway (2016); *Birth of the Universe* at Gavin Brown's enterprise, NY (2014); *Rising* at Studio Voltaire, London (2014); *Judith Bernstein* at Karma International, Zurich (2014); *Birth of the Universe: 18 New Paintings* at The Box (2013); and *Judith Bernstein: HARD* at the New Museum, NY (2012). Recent group exhibitions



include *Seven Stations: Selections from MOCA's Collection*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA (2020); *Artists Respond: American Art and the Vietnam War*, at The Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington D.C. (2019); *United by AIDS*, Migros Museum, Zurich (2019); *Masculinity* at Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn, Germany (2019); *We need to talk...* at Petzel Gallery, NY (2017); *Coming to Power: 25 Years of Sexually Explicit Art By Women*, David Zwirner, NY (2016); *From the Collection*, Kunsthau Zurich, Zurich (2016); *Human Interest: Portraits from the Whitney's Collection* (2016) and *America Is Hard To See* (2015) at the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY; *Keep Your Timber Limber* at ICA, London (2013); and *The Historical Box*, Hauser and Wirth, London (2011). Bernstein has work in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, NY; the Whitney Museum of American Art; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Brooklyn Museum, NY; Jewish Museum, NY; Kunsthau Zurich, Switzerland; Migros Museum, Zurich, Switzerland; Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh; Deste Foundation, Athens, Greece; Sammlung Verbund, Vienna; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT; Neuberger Museum, New York; and Hall Art Foundation, Reading, Vermont. She was the recipient of a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fine Arts Fellowship in 2016.



Judith Bernstein
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Blue Balls (Yellow)
2019
Acrylic and oil on canvas
48 x 48 inches



Hot Hands (Black Lives Matter)
2020
Acrylic on canvas
48 x 48 inches



Blue Balls (Blue)
2019
Acrylic on canvas
48 x 48 inches



Blue Balls #1
2018
Acrylic and oil on canvas
150 x 120 inches



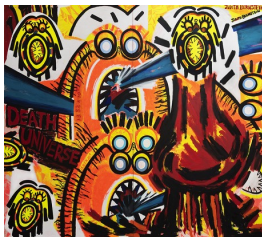
Blue Balls #2
2018
Acrylic and oil on canvas
150 x 120 inches



Money Shot (Blue Balls)
2017
Acrylic and oil on canvas
84 x 86.5 inches



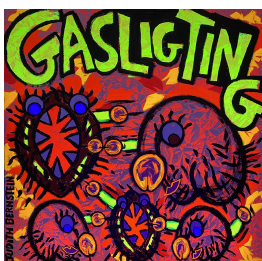
Cabinet of Horrors
2017
Acrylic and oil on canvas
89.75 x 89.25 inches



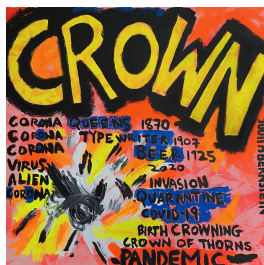
Death of the Universe #1
2018
Acrylic and oil on canvas
150 x 168 inches



Money Shot (Yellow)
2016
Acrylic and oil on canvas
100 x 88 inches



Gaslighting (Red)
2019
Acrylic on canvas
89.5 x 88.5 inches



Crown
2020
Acrylic on canvas
48 x 48 inches



Hot Hand (Blue)
2020
Acrylic on canvas
89.5 x 89.5 inches



Gold Quattro
2016
Acrylic and oil on canvas
89.25 x 89 inches



Our President
2017
Acrylic and oil on canvas
90 x 89.5 inches



Blue Balls (Cocks / Cunts)
2018
Acrylic and oil on canvas
98 x 98.25 inches