

# ETHAN COHEN

## **Double X**

June 27–July 31, 2019

Opening Reception: June 27, 5–7 p.m.

Ethan Cohen Gallery is pleased to present *Double X*, a group exhibition of twelve female artists with distinct artistic practices. Bringing together female artists from variegated cultural backgrounds and ages, *Double X* seeks to analyze gendered categorizations and initiate a conversation regarding female representation in art and the world beyond.

The phenomenon of “all-women” exhibitions is rather new to art history, but its connotation has shifted dramatically in this short time. The urge to include more female artists in the broader narrative of contemporary art is clear and undeniable. The feminist art group Guerilla Girls pointed out the problem of underrepresented female artists a sharp 30 years ago with their piece “Do Women Have To Be Naked To Get Into the Met. Museum?” Yet, the problem remains unresolved, and recent studies tell of serious societal and political barriers that prevent women from entering major institutions today.

According to the National Museum of Women in the Arts, even though 51% of visual artists active today are women, only 13.7% of living artists represented by galleries in Europe and North America are women, and only 12.6% of artists represented in major U.S. museum collections are women<sup>1</sup>. An attempt to counteract this situation often falls into the crisis of categorization. “All-women” exhibitions may be even more discriminatory and biased than one where gender isn’t considered at all.

Art strives to question such categorizations but needs them in order for art to remain a legitimate social force. This is the lens that the gallery uses in presenting an all-women exhibition. What is it that one can sense in purely feminine artwork? Should this concept even rightfully exist anymore? What does art lack in its narrative, being a male-dominated environment? These and many other questions arise when thinking about the binary structure that becomes visible the moment one wants to dismiss it. The 58th Venice Biennale emphasized the importance of including female artists; yet other minorities that hold non-binary gender identities seemed to be left aside. Might our categorizations foster exclusion and reduction? And further, how does our perception of art change upon learning the gender of the artist?

This group exhibition calls on narratives such as that of François Ozon’s 2002 film, *Eight Women*, which depicts the convergence of eight women from varying circumstances who seek common ground while maintaining pride in their distinctions. Gender identity can both bring us together and highlight our differences, urging us to critically examine the purpose and implications of such labels. Featured in this exhibition is the work of twelve artists who identify as women. By presenting these artists under the same roof, we ask viewers to question the cohesion of their messages and decide for themselves what it is that truly binds them together.

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Full list of artists:

Belkıs Balpınar  
Mina Cheon  
Joan Lebold Cohen  
Li Daiyun  
Bian Hong  
Yayoi Kusama  
Sarah Letovsky  
Noga Menache  
Jeannie Motherwell  
Anna Navasardian  
Ana Haixin Wang  
Jeannie Weissglass



Sarah Letovsky, *You Remind Me of Someone*, oil on canvas, 48" x 48", 2014

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<sup>1</sup> Topaz, Chad M et al. "Diversity of artists in major U.S. museums." PloS one vol. 14,3 e0212852. 20 Mar. 2019, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0212852T