

MARC STRAUS NEW YORK

PAUL WALDMAN

Opening Reception: October 24, 2018, 6:00pm – 8:00pm

On View: October 24 - December 16, 2018

MARC STRAUS is pleased to present our inaugural solo exhibition of Paul Waldman, with an opening reception on October 24th from 6pm – 8pm and then remain on view until December 16, 2018.

Paul Waldman has been an artist for over sixty years and lives anew every day through his art. It is reifying and healing. It connects a difficult childhood seamlessly to the present, mythology to scientific fact, and the push and pull of sexuality to trees, crocodiles, and dancers. In the end his art is about truth; respectful of the inner clashes, wary of absolutes. Living is found in the interstices, open to the tug of every second going by, every breath a full and meaningful one. Why else paint all day at age eighty-one unless you love it from start to finish? Waldman's paintings are always a balancing of passions: the paint, the surface, the figure, the edges, the stretcher. It's a religious act, and an act of love.

At the age of fifteen Waldman, b. 1936 in Pennsylvania, was a competitive body builder winning the title of Mr. New York City. Bodybuilding requires great effort and fortitude in the process of remaking the way we appear. It is an extreme, an indulgence, and likely deeply influenced his attitude as an artist, imbuing his practice with a sense of perseverance.

Waldman was just twenty-seven when he had his first solo exhibition at the Alan Stone Gallery, NY, whose famously eclectic program included artists like Wayne Thiebaud, as well as an array of tribal art. Following Allan Stone, Waldman was represented by the Leo Castelli Gallery for twenty-five years where he had nine solo shows. Though Waldman began as a minimalist, over time he became increasingly unfettered from the constraints of dogma, whether minimalism or abstraction. While repetition had rooted itself in his early work, organic forms and art-historical figures began to dominate his paintings. As Carter Radcliff wrote, by the "60's and 70's (Waldman) was a figurative artist tempted by abstraction." His surfaces became increasingly lush and even erotic, dotted with more and more figures. Among the Castelli artists Waldman was most like Jasper Johns, but while Johns' surfaces were layered and additive, Waldman's were hushed and tranquil – each stroke drawing us in.

Beginning in 1986 Waldman began to build elaborate birdhouses adorned with sculpted ornaments, a project he later expanded to his Bird Museum, parts of which can be found at The Boca Raton Museum of Art and the Williams College Museum of Art. These houses defy their utilitarian nature though, standing in as alternate, private universes, conjured as if from the mind of a child.

While he appears to construct foreign universes within his paintings in an almost baroque manner, many of the figures, objects, and animals he depicts are drawn from Waldman's own extensive travels, especially to India. Elephants, dancers, fabrics, jewelry, and headdresses – all swirl onto the canvas of his life. This travel-infused style has also made its way off of the canvas and developed into a compelling sculptural practice.

Paul Waldman's art is owned by many of the most prestigious museums in the world including the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim, NY, the Smithsonian and The Hirshhorn Museum, Washington D.C., and the Louisiana Museum of Art and the Norbyllands Kunstmuseum, Denmark.

For more information, please contact **Ken Tan: ken@marcstraus.com**



Swinger
October 2017
Oil on Acrylic
42 x 37 in (106.68 x 93.98 cm)