



March 4, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

This May, Rehs Contemporary will unveil a series of new works from Julie Bell at her first solo exhibition, *Lush*. The body of work put forth is a culmination of more than a year’s work... and a lifetime of examining a myriad of textures and surfaces all through the exploration of diverse themes, both terrestrial and otherworldly.

Lush takes us on a journey inside the fantasy worlds shaped in Julie’s early compositions. When observing the work, it is apparent how Julie’s experiences have greatly influenced her aesthetic... most notably, her initial ventures into illustrations, particularly fantasy illustration, and her later love for western and wildlife paintings.

Bell credits a particular photograph, *Child in Forest*, by Wynn Bullock as a primary source of inspiration. The image shows the interior of an ancient redwood forest, with a girl laying in the lush growth of oxalis covering the floor. Reflecting back Bell says, “ I remember seeing this when I was a child and just wanting to live in that photo.” Bell’s relationship and love for animals, forests, the beach and the sky continued to grow and be a driving force behind much of her imagery. For her, “nature, though wild and unpredictable, has always made sense and been a source of comfort.”

Throughout Bell’s career, wildlife and fantasy inspired settings have permeated her work; whether it was in the 90s, doing work for Marvel Comics, or her studies in the 2000s at the Lakota Wolf Preserve for a series of book covers – an experience which afforded her the opportunity of not only being close to the wolves, but to truly understand how they interact. In retrospect, the latter proved to be a seminal moment for the artist. It sparked a fascination with trying to capture the sense of movement and emotion when two individual beings communicate in non-verbal but powerful ways; that underlying sentiment is very much present in this current series.

As Bell pressed on, she broadened the scope of her subjects from those found in traditional western-art. While horses, foxes, wolves and bison still make appearances, much of the work has taken a more exotic turn including species such as lions, zebras, flamingos and elephants. The wide range of subjects allows, and challenges, Bell to explore an endless number of surfaces in order to render them in perfection. As she puts it, “I’ve chosen to accentuate the light, textures and temperatures in a purposely tactile way so that the viewer can reach in and feel my world.” But, the composition doesn’t end there... the most recent transition in Bell’s

oeuvre could be said to show an increasing shift to portraying imagined scenes that express an idea or emotion through a realistic visual vocabulary. The reintroduction of a figurative element enables Bell to expressly shape the narrative of her work and the manner in which the viewer connects. She expounds, “in addition to the landscape, the raw emotional expressions of my animals and their connections with each other, as well as the humans depicted, describes my own experiences in the luxury of Nature.”

Lush is simply the next step in a journey into better understanding connections and interactions. It encapsulates Bell’s awareness of every detail of our environment, and her mindfulness as to the importance of emotion, as well as how those are intertwined.

Lush opens to the public on May 4, 2019 with an opening reception from 1-6PM. The exhibit will remain on view through May 24, 2019.

If you would like to request high-resolution images of featured work, please contact Lance Rehs at Lance@Rehs.com.

About Rehs Contemporary

Rehs Contemporary is regarded as one of the top galleries in New York City and is a platform for new, emerging and established contemporary artists; many of whom have received extensive academic training. The gallery offers high quality works to art lovers of all kinds, from first-time buyers to major collectors.

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Lion Nebula



Glory's Arrival



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