

TOGETHER

HELAINE BLUMENFELD OBE

Gallery Eight, 8 Duke Street St James's, London SW1Y 6BN**16th April – 3rd May**

Opening hours: 10am-6pm daily

Open air exhibit in St James's Square gardens**16th April – 26th July (participating in London Art Week 2024)**

St James's Square is open to the public 7.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri

Hignell Gallery is pleased to present TOGETHER, by the acclaimed sculptor Helaine Blumenfeld OBE. The exhibition features Blumenfeld's newest works, conceived against the backdrop of our turbulent world and explores the essence of vulnerability and the light of hope. The exhibition features 30 sculptures in marble, bronze and wood, presented in two adjacent venues, the gallery space and an open air exhibition in the historic gardens of St James's Square in the heart of St James's.



Blumenfeld's presentation of eight new marble sculptures in this exhibition is a testament to her drive and longevity. Dr Timothy Potts, director of the J Paul Getty Museum has said about Blumenfeld "There are artists who gain a lot of attention at the moment, and may find their imitators, but they don't stand the test of time, and the test of time is the only test that matters. Blumenfeld's work will survive and I'm sure she will have a place in 20th and 21st century history. Her sculpture is timeless, an expression of the human form and of human desire."

Blumenfeld's practice has often been inspired by exploring themes of interdependence and balance. "Art is a commitment to risk," Blumenfeld says. "Art is a reflection of life – nothing ever stays the same." Many of her earlier works were more personal, exploring notions of introspection and intimacy. Her latest pieces go beyond the exploration of personal relationships to discovering the relationships within and between societies. "During the pandemic people all over the world called to each other and sang songs of hope and encouragement from their windows and balconies," Blumenfeld said. "The turmoil and pain of the pandemic seemed to have created a heightened sense of togetherness. In my lifetime I have experienced extraordinary shifts on a personal and a societal level from fear, despair and isolation to dreams, hope and community. I believe we are going through a transformative period now. I feel this profoundly. My sculptures reflect this transition. We must find personal and tangible ways to pursue, grasp and make manifest our dream for a truly connected future together."

Blumenfeld's reflections on the contemporary world are echoed in her latest works which suggest that whilst we may be perilously balancing on the edge, together we can move beyond it. "We need to have a deep knowledge of each other and work toward an increased sense of community. We must empathise with one another before we will be able to connect and be together on a human scale." Blumenfeld firmly believes that engaging with art can help us to do this. Possibilities and new challenges intersect as seen in her most recent pieces such as *Beyond the Precipice: Together* (2024) and *Together: Empathy* (2022) which refine and extend the ideas in *Exodus III* (2020) and *Intimacy and Isolation: Empathy* (2020).

About her newest series of works Blumenfeld said, "With *Light Within*, *Dreams* and *Together* -- I am expressing my conviction that in order to move from fear to hope we must embrace our dreams, search our inner light and recognize the pain and the beauty of one another. To move forward we must begin by recognising that to succeed we will need each other. Art can increase our sense of hope and togetherness. It wakes us up, unsettles us, evokes our emotions and extends our vision."

For over forty years Blumenfeld has created more than 90 large-scale sculptures for private and public clients. Her



Beyond the Precipice, 2024



Toward the Precipice, 2019



Beyond the Precipice: Together, 2024

public sculptures sympathetically connect a physical and conceptual space, creating centres of meaning within each community. Blumenfeld is a passionate believer in the importance of the positive power of beauty and the difference it can make to peoples' lives. It is Blumenfeld's conviction that when people claim a work and make it their own, public sculpture can truly fulfil a role and become a language of social change.

Best known for her monumental public commissions, Blumenfeld is passionate about bringing sculpture into the public domain, creating works that have become integral to the cultural landscape of the UK. Most notably, *Tempesta* (2012) at The Lancasters overlooking Hyde Park in London, *Fortuna* (2016), in Canary Wharf, the same year she was invited to exhibit at the Venice Architectural Biennale. Blumenfeld's latest public commission in 2023 *Hommage* celebrates the 50th anniversary of education for women at Clare College, Cambridge. *Hommage* was specially created to commemorate this milestone and is an expression of the continuing struggle for women's rights. Separate strands join together and rise through dissonance to a unified presentation of hope, aspiration and the possibility of continuous advancement. Seen from different angles, the sculpture represents the upheaval and the triumph inherent in striving for change. The maquette for this sculpture is included in the gallery exhibition. Blumenfeld's work represents some of the most definitive examples of public sculpture in the UK.

Sky Arts premiered the documentary 'Hard Beauty: Helaine Blumenfeld' in 2018. This personal portrait includes Timothy Potts, Director of J Paul Getty Museum discussing Blumenfeld's work and sheds light on the latest developments in her remarkable career, including the installation of her work in the permanent collection of the Victoria & Albert Museum and the creation of *Tree of Life: Encounter* commissioned by The Woolf Institute and unveiled by The Princess Royal.

Illusion (pictured at Pilane in Sweden) will feature in St James's Square



Notes to editors

Helaine Blumenfeld OBE grew up in New York and graduated from the University of Michigan. She studied Moral Philosophy at Columbia University, receiving a PhD in 1964. She married her husband Yorick in 1963 and moved to Paris where she studied sculpture with Ossip Zadkine. She had her first solo exhibition in 1966 in Palais Palfy, Vienna. There follows an impressively long list of exhibitions in Britain, Europe, Scandinavia, China, Korea, Singapore and the United States. Most notable recent exhibitions include: Ely Cathedral, Pilane Sculpture Park in Sweden, Het Depot Sculpture Gallery in the Netherlands, Huygens' Hofwijck Museum near The Hague and the largest show of her work to date at Canary Wharf.

Blumenfeld spends her time working in her studios in Pietrasanta (Italy) and in Grantchester, on the outskirts of Cambridge and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Sculptors and has served on its council and as its Vice President. In 2007, she was the first woman to win the International Sculpture prize Il Premio Pietrasanta e la Versilia nel Mondo. Three monographs have been written about her work.

As Timothy Potts, Director of J Paul Getty Museum commented 'Blumenfeld is a force of nature; an extraordinary artist, and a great contributor beyond her work itself. She's been an incredible advocate for public sculpture, for the arts and what they can do in communities and the effect they can have on people. And that of course is what the arts are there to do. I've been very privileged to experience this first-hand.'

About Hignell Gallery

Hignell Gallery Ltd. was established in 2015 by twentieth century and contemporary sculpture specialist Abby Hignell and entrepreneur and art collector Waheed Alli in Shepherd Market, Mayfair.

Representing some of the leading figures in contemporary sculpture, Hignell Gallery's roster includes Helaine Blumenfeld OBE, Sophie Ryder and Laura Ellen Bacon. The gallery's inaugural exhibition showcased a selection of the twentieth century greats of Modern British sculpture with works by Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth and Lynn Chadwick. Recent sculpture projects include the group show 'Renaturing Nature' including works by Kate MccGwire, Peter Randall-Page RA and Joanna Vasconcelos, 'Recent solo exhibits include 'Sophie Ryder at The Piece Hall' in collaboration with The Arts Council and "Chaque Fibre de Mon Être" (Every Fibre of my Being) by Laura Ellen Bacon in L'Abbaye de Maubuisson France.

The gallery specialises in promoting women artists and the exhibition program includes monumental and site-specific installations. Hignell Gallery has placed its sculptures in important private and public collections including The Sainsbury Centre and The Phoebus Foundation. Laura Ellen Bacon will be exhibiting at Denver Art Museum Summer 2024. Abby Hignell was invited to join the vetting committee for Masterpiece Art Fair 2022 and Treasure House Art Fair 2023. Hignell Gallery is a member of The Society of London Art Dealers. Only 15% of the Society of London Art Dealers' 165 member galleries are directed or owned by women.

Contact

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Living with Dreams, 2023