

Lyles & King

Kathy Ruttenberg

Twilight in the Garden of Hope

May 18 - June 24, 2023

Opening Reception: Thursday, May 18, 5-8pm

Lyles & King is pleased to present *Twilight in the Garden of Hope*, a monumental sculptural installation by New York-based artist Kathy Ruttenberg in the gallery's outdoor sculpture space. This is her second presentation with the gallery.

Sixteen feet tall, a colossal anthropomorphic tree trunk looms over a nude woman lying in a pond. Water spills from the tree's nose—an amputated branch—onto the figure's exposed flesh down below. Ruttenberg's sculpted sylvan scene is a continuation of her explorations into the kinetic possibilities of sculpture on a breathtakingly immense scale.

The multi-surfaced world of Ruttenberg's masterful sculptures explores broader questions of feminism, femininity, and ecology. Her sculpted worlds have previously hinted towards a bucolic escape from our modern condition, buoyed by a sense of optimism. Within *Twilight in the Garden of Hope*, the woman's immersed body, surrounded by a coterie of goldfish, recalls Millais' painting of Ophelia, whose innocence and blind obedience tragically leads to madness and a final watery death.

In conversation, Ruttenberg admits to feeling a particular malaise about our current moment, especially given the fragility of reproductive rights in the US, and climate change on a global scale. *Twilight in the Garden of Hope* seems to address these worries, personifying a natural rage and possible reckoning. On the rear of the tree, Ruttenberg depicts a scene from the Garden of Eden, based on a famous etching by Albrecht Dürer. Here Ruttenberg addresses humanity's original sin, or as the artist herself puts it, our "original fuck up."

Given our species' historic performances, perhaps reasons to hope are thin, but Ruttenberg still retains the power of positive thought. "There has to be some optimism," she says. "That's all we can give the next generation." In this constituted grove in the center of Manhattan's Chinatown, Ruttenberg's profound installation lays the rawest of Ruttenberg's private hopes in the open, outside for all to see.

Kathy Ruttenberg (b. 1957, Chicago, US) has had work exhibited in *Maternity Leave: None of Women Born*, curated by Ben Lee Ritchie Handler, Green Family Art Foundation, Dallas, US; *Symbiosis*, curated by Beth Rudin DeWoody, Berkshire Botanical Garden, Stockbridge, US; *Création contemporaine et céramique*, Biennale Internationale de Vallauris, FR; *The 5th World Ceramic Biennale Korea*, Icheon, KR; Lyles & King, New York, US; Kasmin, New York, US; Margot Samel, New York, US; Miguel Abreu Gallery, New York, US; Museo Internazionale delle Ceramiche, Faenza, IT; Sladmore Contemporary, London, UK; Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, New Paltz, US; Francis M. Naumann Fine Art, New York, US; Stefan Stux Gallery, New York, US; and American Museum Of Ceramic Art, Pomona, CA; among many others. She has permanent public installations at Tisch Children's Zoo, Central Park, New York, US, and Mamiraua Sustainable Development Reserve, Amazonas, BR. Ruttenberg lives and works in Upstate New York.