

# EDWARD CELLA

ART + ARCHITECTURE

6018 Wilshire Blvd.,  
323.525.0053

Los Angeles, CA 90036  
www.edwardcella.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ECAA ANNOUNCES A SOLO EXHIBITION ENTITLED:



***The Venus Paintings* by Mary Heebner**  
**November 2 through December 28, 2013**

**Opening Reception:**  
**Saturday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> from 6 to 8 PM**

**(Los Angeles) - Edward Cella Art + Architecture** is pleased to announce the exhibition: *The Venus Paintings*, by Mary Heebner. Heebner's lush large format collages convey an emotive intensity and visual immediacy, inspired in part by the artist's study of the Venus mythology across varied cultures, eras, and geographies. Heebner reimagines the myth's expansive historical and cultural legacy by drawing from the evidence of existing fragments of classical and antique statuary. Materially rendered by the hand of a consummate paper maker with a unique mastery of aqueous pigment, the work explores themes of embodiment and femininity with a contemporary resonance that ultimately suggests the lasting poetic vitality of these vestiges of ancient civilizations.

Mary Heebner's development of her unique collage and painting process stems from her interest in the mysterious, and at times mystical, alchemical potential of the medium. The legacy of collage is firmly established as an inherently transformative process dedicated to the assemblage and re-contextualization of the material fragment. Influenced by the renowned American collage artist William Dole, a close colleague and teacher of the artist's, Heebner belongs to a venerable tradition of American collage artists. In Heebner's hands, this material strategy results in an almost geological concretion of information. Combining handmade paper, raw pigments, photography, and painting to create layered composites, the artist creates living entities that manifest an organic life and presence that emanate from within. An

adjunct exhibition of collages by William Dole (1917-1983) will hang concurrently with Heebner's project to emphasize the creative reciprocity of their respective practices.

The artist has used these material strategies in past collections of work to explore historical, spiritual, literary, and geographic themes often inspired by her extensive world travels. In this new series, and in keeping with her earlier explorations, Heebner builds the *Venus Paintings* intuitively through the rhythmic accumulation of handmade paper fragments suspended like tesserae within a field of bold brushstrokes: a pentimento of material and cultural flotsam. The artist's re-consideration of the historical artifact is affective rather than cerebral, as she looks to the diverse proliferation of cultural mythologies surrounding the figure of the Venus as an embodiment of feminine sexuality. Sourcing remnants of antique statuary from a range of ancient civilizations, spanning from Iraq and Abyssinia, to Greece and Rome, Heebner re-interprets them organically as living vestiges of beauty and seduction. The co-existence of past and "presence" in Heebner's work suggests a complex temporality, and conveys the artist's interest in the concept of anima. The artist invokes, and ultimately re-animates, the historical with the sensual immediacy of a psychically embodied "here and now", invigorating the inanimate with her soulful projections. The sensual *Venus Paintings*, part artifact and part interpretative abstraction, combine the figurative with the expressive imminence of abstraction to explore the theme of the body as a vessel for meaning, spirit, psyche, and metaphor.

*The Venus Paintings* is the gallery's third exhibition of new works by Mary Heebner.

Mary Heebner completed an MFA at UC Santa Barbara studying under William Dole, and has been exhibited extensively throughout the United States. Her collage paintings and accomplished *Simplemente Maria Press* book works have been acquired by several notable public collections, including the *San Francisco Museum of Modern Art*, *The New York Public Library*, NY, *The National Gallery of Art*, Washington DC, *The British Library*, United Kingdom, *Columbia University Special Collections*, NY, *Yale University Library*, MA, *Harvard University Library*, MA, *The United States Library of Congress*, Washington DC, *The J P Getty Research Institute*, and the *UCLA Special Collections Research Library*, Los Angeles, among many others. The artist was the subject of a major survey exhibition at *Chapman University: Mary Heebner: A Survey of Artist's Books from Simplemente Maria Press, and the Paintings that Inspired Them* (2013), and was recently selected to participate in the UCLA Library's *Center for Oral History Research* as a feature artist for their oral histories interview series.

### **Special Exhibition Program**

#### *Exhibition Talk with Mary Heebner*

Join Mary Heebner and gallerist Edward Cella in conversation. This informal tour of the exhibition will offer insights into the artist's most recent large format collage paintings.

Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013 | 5 pm

For press inquiries, images, or general questions contact:

Marieke Treilhard / 323.525.0053

[marieke@edwardcella.com](mailto:marieke@edwardcella.com)

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