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JILL LEVINE: *Cats Talk*

APRIL 17 – MAY 11, 2014

Opening reception: Thursday, April 17, 6:00-8:00 PM



Lena, 2011; Styrofoam covered with plaster-dipped gauze, modeling compound and oil paint, 19 x 14 x 9 ½ in.

New York, NY (March 25, 2014) Hionas Gallery is pleased to announce the forthcoming *Cats Talk*, a solo exhibition of new and recent mixed-media sculpture and drawings from artist Jill Levine. A full color catalogue will accompany the exhibition and include an essay by Tavia Fortt. The show will run from April 17 to May 11, 2014.

Levine's wall mounted sculptures are true anomalies, each one a quasi-symmetrical lifelike figure born neither of nature nor folklore, but rather the artist's own travels, imagination and reinterpretation of iconography, with an effect that is plastic, painterly and playful. In recent years Levine has traveled frequently to Mexico, making it something of a second home. For this series she has adopted renderings of various mythological ancients—such as *Mictlantecuhtli*, the Aztec God of the Underworld, as well as Mayan glyphs and the more recent *La Calavera Catrina*, the skeletal “lady of death” that has become the icon for Dia de

Muertos—which she then projects onto her blank forms, serving as inspiration for the final composition of intricate, weighted and intersecting lines that seem to bear coded references in each curve and contour. Also informing the graphic, even textile-design quality found on a number of Levine's pieces are antique cylinder seals, which were once used to stamp clay vessels in relief, as well as to decorate fabric, paper, and skin.

For her sculptures the artist begins with Styrofoam pieces of varying shape and size then assembles them into gaunt and voluptuous concoctions, not unlike those found in the animation of George Dunning or Terry Gilliam. The pseudo-abstract forms she arrives at over time are creaturely and totemic hybrids with little regard for physiology. The pieces are then covered in plaster-dipped gauze, modeling compound, and finally painted in oil. Each has a singular presence, as if removed from the totem, placed on the wall, and evolving on its own with distinct coloration and poise.

In *Cats Talk* Levine also presents a series of 5 x 7 in. pencil and gouache drawings, each one an angular codex depicting the very forms that inspire her sculpture. In a sense these pieces reveal the larger body of work's genesis, and also show the artist's exacting gift for line and pattern.

The opening reception for *Cats Talk* will take place on Thursday evening, April 17, from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. The artist will be present. For more information visit www.hionasgallery.com.

About the artist:

Jill Levine is a native New Yorker. She attended Queens College, where she earned her BA and also received a fellowship to the Yale Summer School of Art at Norfolk, CT. She earned her MFA from the Yale University School of Art, which included a semester at the Royal College of Art in London. She has been exhibiting regularly since the late 1970s in both group and solo exhibitions. In 2000 she was the recipient of the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship and in 2005 a NYFA Fellowship. Her sculpture is included among numerous private and corporate collections worldwide as well as in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, and the Art in Embassies, Mumbai Embassy. She lives and works in New York.

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