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IDA APPLEBROOG'S 'MONALISA' TO GO ON VIEW IN NEW YORK

January 19 – March 6, 2010
 Opening: Tuesday, January 19, 6-8pm

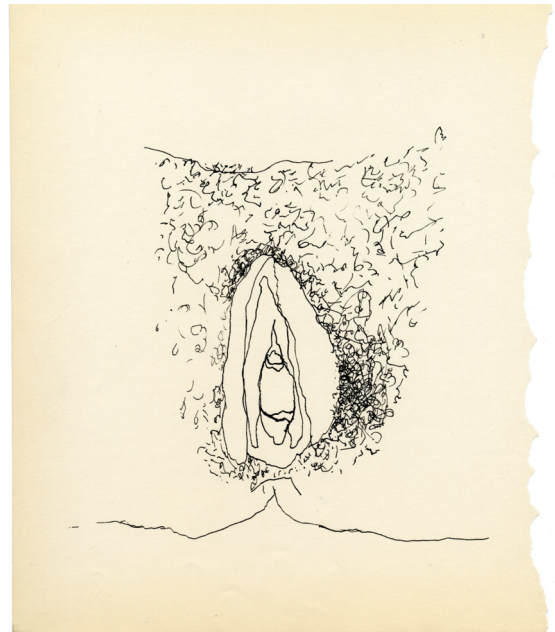
New York, NY... In 1969, Bronx-born Ida Applebroog was living in southern California with her husband and four children. Busy as a mother and an artist, she took refuge in the one place that guaranteed solitude: the bathtub, a "little sanctuary" where she would soak for two to three hours every evening. Over the course of several weeks that year Applebroog also brought sketchpads to the bathroom and drew her own naked body – specifically her crotch – from reflections in a mirror. The result of this ritual was more than 160 vagina drawings rendered in India ink and pencil. Some were highly detailed, others were fancifully exaggerated, and still others were abstractions comprising a single elegantly curved line. Each drawing chronicled an intimate act of self-exploration.

These drawings, unseen by anyone other than their maker, returned with Applebroog to New York City in 1974 and were packed in a basement and forgotten until studio assistants discovered them in early 2009. Together these images comprise a remarkable archive that, forty years on, serves as a key component in an entirely new body of work called *Monalisa*. The centerpiece of this project is a room-sized wooden structure covered with more than 100 new drawings made from the original vagina images, which Applebroog has scanned onto handmade Gampi paper, enlarged and digitally manipulated, enhanced with occasional washes of pale pink, grey, and yellow. Translucent vellum wrapping a bare, enclosed wooden structure, the facades of this building evoke skin stretched over a bony skeleton. Applebroog's architecture – an updated "little sanctuary" conceived through the lens of 80 years of life – makes home and body interchangeable analogs, containing the terrors and pleasures of existing in both.

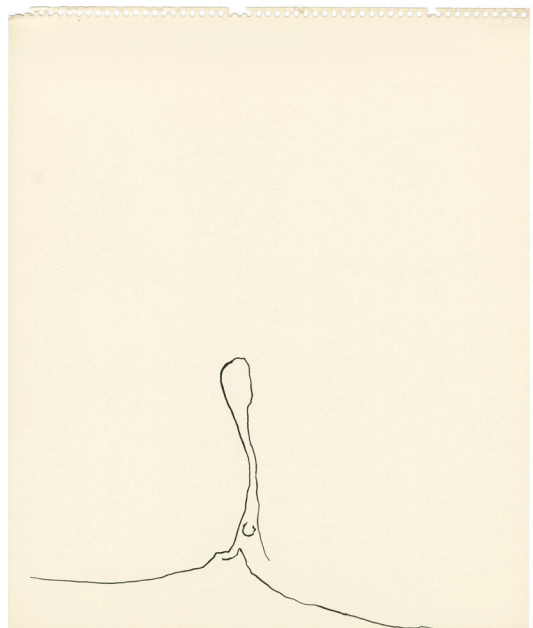
Beginning January 19, 2010, Hauser & Wirth New York will present this major installation in the exhibition 'MONALISA', on view through March 6. 'MONALISA' also will include a selection of the original vagina drawings from 1969.

The exhibition is accompanied by a new book, *Ida Applebroog MONALISA*, featuring an extensive illustrated essay by critic and art historian Julia Bryan-Wilson and a photographic study of the Monalisa house by Abby Robinson.

Applebroog's construction is based upon a photograph of a small home in the early stages of its framing, unfinished and



GROUP A #9
 1969
 Ink on paper
 27 x 21 cm / 10 5/8 x 8 1/4 in



GROUP G #4
 1969
 Ink on paper
 35.6 x 27.9 cm / 14 x 11 in

empty. Her exterior and interior walls are a patchwork of the new vellum vagina drawings. Other drawings are affixed to small ladders that lean against the interior surfaces. There is no open front door; the viewer cannot enter but can peer inside through the gaps, slits and seams of the patch-worked walls of vulva images. On the interior back wall hangs Applebroog's large painting (*Monalisa*) of a reclining doll-like figure amid a deep red atmosphere, legs spread and a direct yet inscrutable gaze on her face. Where the front door would be, an ambiguously gendered visage (*Brian*) stares. Applebroog refers to her installation as "Monalisa's house." However, at roughly eight and a half feet wide, sixteen feet deep, and twelve feet high, the structure is more a room than a house. It simultaneously calls to mind Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and Marcel Duchamp's infamous *Etant Donnés*, which was unveiled to the public for the first time in 1969-- the same year that Applebroog found sanctuary in the bathroom.

With *Monalisa*, Applebroog has made a portrait of the exquisite unresolved tensions between self-disclosure and interiority, public and private life, the priorities of womanhood and the prerogatives of an artist. By revisiting images made forty years ago and further advancing her work's inventive relationship between form and content, the artist's installation connects directly with previous achievements while forging fresh directions. Her career has spanned more than four decades, taking her from artist's books to paintings and video, to digitally produced drawings and now, full environments. But in all of these she has been pre-occupied by the same issues of emotional violence, politics of domestic space, and the dark humor of everyday gestures. The new work on view in the exhibition 'MONALISA' uses seriality in ways that formally echo Applebroog's critically admired multi-paneled pieces – works that repeat an image but add simple sentences that undercut its presumed innocence to reveal failures in language, psychosexual damage and power inequities – but introduce a more open, if no less challenging, narrative.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Ida Applebroog was born in the Bronx, New York in 1929, and lives and works in Manhattan. She attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and received an honorary doctorate from the New School University / Parsons School of Design. Applebroog has been making pointed social commentary in the form of beguiling comic-like images for nearly half a century in work best known for 'everyman' figures, anthropomorphized animals and half human-half creature characters, all players in the political theater of her work. Strong elements of Applebroog's oeuvre include gender and sexual identity, power struggles both political and personal, and the pernicious role of mass media in desensitizing the general public to violence.

In addition to paintings, Applebroog has created sculptures, artist's books, films (including a collaboration with her daughter, the artist Beth B.) and animated shorts that appeared on the side of a moving truck and on a giant screen in Times



MONALISA (detail of work in progress)

2009

Gampi, mylar, ink, pigment, oil, watercolor and wood
279.4 x 365.8 x 372.1 cm / 110 x 144 x 146 1/2 in



MONALISA (work in progress at artist's studio)

2009

Gampi, mylar, ink, pigment, oil, watercolor and wood
279.4 x 365.8 x 372.1 cm / 110 x 144 x 146 1/2 in

Square. Applebroog has received many awards, including a John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Achievement Award and a Lifetime Achievement Award from the College Art Association. Her work has been shown in many solo exhibitions at galleries and museums in the United States and internationally, including the Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston; and the High Museum of Art, Atlanta, among others.

ABOUT HAUSER & WIRTH

Hauser & Wirth is a global enterprise, founded in Zürich in 1992 by Iwan and Manuela Wirth and Ursula Hauser. Since 1996 the gallery has been located in the former Löwenbrau brewery building, along with other contemporary art galleries, the Kunsthalle Zürich, and the Migros Museum.

In 2003, Hauser & Wirth opened Hauser & Wirth London on Piccadilly in an historic building designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, adding a new and energetic dimension to London's growing importance as an international art center. In 2006, Hauser & Wirth at Colnaghi was created on London's Old Bond Street. Hauser & Wirth New York opened to the public on the Upper East Side of Manhattan in September 2009.

Hauser & Wirth New York is open to visitors Tuesday through Saturday, 10 am until 6 pm. The general public can find additional information about the gallery, its exhibitions and programs online at: www.hauserwirth.com.



MONALISA
2009
Mixed media on canvas
79.7 x 94.3 x 3.8 cm / 31 3/8 x 37 1/8 x 1 1/2 in

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