

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

GAME II

The Works of Gayle Wells Mandle and Julia Mandle



Gayle Wells Mandle & Julia Mandle, *Burning Throne*, 2012
Archival inkjet print on Epson, hot press bright paper, 84 x 44 in / 213.4 x 111.8 cm

January 17 – February 16, 2013

Opening reception: January 17, 6:30 to 8:30 pm

New York, NY — Leila Heller is pleased to present, *Game II*, an exhibition featuring collaborative and individual works of mother-daughter artists Gayle Wells Mandle and Julia Mandle, on view at Leila Heller Gallery, located at 568 West 25th Street, from January 17 through February 16, 2013.

In *Game II*, Gayle Wells Mandle and Julia Mandle use images – not of ladders but of chairs and a teeter-totter – to depict humanity’s eternal struggle against imbalanced societies that deny their citizens equal opportunity. Inspired by current events in the Middle East and the United States – where the Occupy movement and subsequent 2012 presidential election brought issues of economic inequity to the forefront – the Mandles express their ideas through a combination of media, styles and objects that infuse their art with topical meaning and depth.

The exhibition stems from a warm partnership that they refer to as “mother daughter gasoline” dedicated to making art that speaks for a majority of the world’s people who aspire to greater security, opportunity and justice in the world. Through their work, Gayle and Julia Mandle,

attempt to effect change by challenging people of all backgrounds to think more openly and inclusively about the world around them.

As Roger Mandle, Ph D., former President of the Rhode Island School of Design and director of the Qatar Museums Authority (QMA), explains in the exhibition catalogue, “It is important to understand their work as part of a larger effort by 21st century artists to create a new, more inclusive “public art” that builds on the legacy of their predecessors – from Goya and Manet to Picasso and Rauschenberg. By using their own techniques and technologies as tools to express concerns about social, political and environmental issues, my wife and daughter are attempting to extend viewers’ sights past the work seen in the gallery and outward towards the larger world.”

Over the past decade, the work of Gayle and Julia Mandle has become increasingly more message-driven. Timely references to global events now inform everything they make, from performances to paintings, embroidery to large and small-scale sculpture, drawings to photographs. While each artist has grown in her own way, their close relationship has enabled them to learn from and inspire each other.

In 2011, Gayle and Julia showed together in an exhibition called *Game*, creating work that was both complementary in nature yet distinctly different in approach. *Hypermarket*, Gayle’s series of 38 paintings – exhibited as a large composite on a single wall – focused on the expat community living in the Persian Gulf region, whereas Julia’s work, *Lamiya’s Last Game*, centered on the tragedy of children killed or maimed playing with cluster bombs in Iraq and other war-ravaged countries.

In this new exhibition both artists draw strong inspiration from the 2012 Arab Spring uprisings, creating work that expresses their respect and concern for the pro-democratic individuals who took to the streets. As a result, *Game II* portrays the uneven playing field in which oppressed people struggle for equal rights.

The central installation in the exhibition, *Study for a Monument*, and the paintings, sculpture, photographs and embroideries that surround it, could spill into the streets as a cry for justice for those who have given so much for freedom and civil rights. The burned chairs in the piece provide metaphorical references to the many individuals who sacrificed their lives to help others. The stacked chairs weighing down the giant teeter-totter and thrusting an empty throne into the air suggests our eternal struggle for fairness, parity and respect for all. One can imagine this monument cast in bronze, standing 50 feet high in the center of Tahrir Square, for example, or in other places where disenfranchised citizens have stood up against tyranny.

About Gayle Wells Mandle

Gayle Wells Mandle remains influenced by the disparity between the haves and the have-nots in society. In Washington, DC in the late 1980’s she witnessed the growing homeless population, especially in juxtaposition with the limousine-driven legislators. Mandle’s *Homeless Series* developed into a solo exhibition at the Addison/Ripley Gallery. Wanting to delve more into socio-political painting, she earned her MFA in 1997 at RISD, commencing many solo and group exhibitions throughout the United States. She continues to catalogue decisions based on power and persuasion, and her work has been particularly focused on the Iraq War. After moving to Doha, Qatar in 2008, Mandle curated an exhibition and symposium in 2010 for Leila Heller

Gallery called “BEYOND THE WAR”. The purpose was to highlight the artwork of 7 important Iraqi artists now forced to live in the diaspora. One of the underlying themes of this exhibition was that the language of art has the ability to unite people of different cultural backgrounds, while the language of war only divides mankind.

About Julia Mandle

A recipient of a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in Performance Art, Julia Mandle has received numerous awards throughout her career including her earliest grant from Franklin Furnace Fund for Performance Art, and later from The Foundation for Contemporary Art, New York State Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts. She was also awarded artist’s residencies at Guapamacataro, Michoacan, Mexico; Yaddo, Saratoga Springs, New York; Baryshnikov Arts Center, New York, New York; and at Weir Farm Trust, Wilton, CT. Julia has lectured on her art and interdisciplinary approach at the Whitney Museum of American Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Parsons School of Design, Amherst College, and Pratt Institute, and has served on the new genre panel for the Rhode Island Arts Council and the architecture jury at Columbia University. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Williams College and a Master of Arts at the Gallatin School of New York University.

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