

## **GALERIE KORNFELD**

presents

### **Elvira Bach & Natela Iankosvili for Frieze New York Online 2021**

Galerie Kornfeld presents works by Georgian artist Natela Iankosvili (Born, 1918 –2007) and German artist Elvira Bach (Born, 1951). Both artists exhumed the traditional notions of painting of their time and challenged their contemporaries with new forms of worldliness. Their nonconformist characters took them to a series of travels inspiring this oeuvre around the "other", Bach traveling to the Caribbean and Africa while Iankosvili to Cuba and Mexico. Considering contemporary political and cultural hostility, there seems no better time to showcase the work of two female artists who from the 1960's onwards captured, through their bold paintings, a more open and inclusive world where neither the nationality nor the color of one's skin stopped their expression.

Iankosvili showcased an early departure from grim representation of Communist reality towards a more vibrant, individualistic style. Her travels cemented in her a desire to freely depict imagery usually unseen to the typically isolated USSR where to exist as an artist was to conform to societies stringent masculine norms. Her painting "Black Woman with Child" provided a radical symbol for women's emancipation and human rights. Themes of motherhood and femininity replaced the pseudo-ethnographic sexless depictions of female workers of the time.

Elvira Bach, associated with the "Junge Wilde" movement, is one of Germany's well-known painters of her generation and a pioneer in expressing female sexuality within her works. Bach was one of few women within this movement and as such was able to effectively portray the zeitgeist for the traditional feminine archetype. In 1981, she spent three months in the Caribbean as an "artist in residence". Between 1986-1992 Bach spent time in Senegal where she met her Senegalese husband with whom she later had two children. Her portrayal of vibrant females are based on her experiences as an international artist and mother of two.

### **Natela Iankosvili**

Iankosvili studied at the Art Academy in Tbilisi. She showcased an early departure from the grim representation of idealized scenes of Communist reality towards a more vibrant, individualistic painterly style. Despite her differences, she was nonetheless appreciated during the 1960's, during a comparatively liberal time for the Soviet Union. This appreciation for her work led to the artist being given the rare opportunity for a woman to travel to Europe, Cuba and Mexico. Her travels cemented in her work a desire to freely depict imagery usually unseen to the typically isolated Soviet Union where to exist as an artist was to conform to societies stringent masculine norms. Her painting Black Madonna provided a radical symbol for women's emancipation and human rights. Themes such as motherhood and femininity replaced the pseudo-ethnographic sexless depictions of female workers of the 1950s and 1960s. Iankosvili's work thus presented not only atmospheric and sensual depictions of the characteristic landscapes of her homeland but also portraits of her friends and exotic personalities she met throughout her travels. Her canvases are covered in dark blacks and greens painted with tonal intensity and in broad brilliant brushstrokes. In 1961, 100 works from her graphic series 'Cuba', "Mexico", and "Svaneti" were exhibited in the house of Art workers in Tbilisi. Following the end of the Soviet Union, Iankosvili was awarded the Shota Rustaveli-Prize, followed by institutional exhibitions including the Tretyakov State Gallery in Moscow, The National Gallery in Tbilisi and a retrospective 100-year exhibition at the Zurab Tsereteli Museum of Modern Art in 2018. In 2017 she was presented in Art Brussels Rediscovery with Galerie Kornfeld and in 2018 at Frieze New York Spotlight leading to important institutional placements in the US and Europe. Iankosvili's work will be included in a group presentation at the 16th international Istanbul Biennial this year and a retrospective book of her life and work will be published in December 2019 written by curator Mamuka Biladze in German and English.

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## **Elvira Bach**

Elvira Bach, born in 1951 in Bad Neuenhain, Germany, studied under Hann Trier at the Berlin University of the Arts between 1972 and 1978. Associated with the "Junge Wilde" movement, and after receiving an invitation to Documenta 7 in 1982, she quickly gained national and international recognition, becoming one of Germany's most well-known painters of her generation and a pioneer in Germany in expressing female sexuality and desire within her works. Bach was one of only few women within this movement and as such was able to effectively portray the zeitgeist for the traditional feminine archetype. In 1981, she spent three months in the Caribbean as an "artist in residence". Between 1986 and 1992 Bach spent a lot of time in Senegal where she met her Senegalese husband with whom she later had two children. Her portrayal of vibrant females are based on and inspired by her experiences as an international artist and mother of two. Her sculptural work within the exhibition symbolizes the female, and motherhood, as the vessel and beginning of life. Whether as Femme Fatale or snake charmer, the fascinating mix of melancholy and irony, erotic and exotic, within her work is unmistakably Elvira Bach. Bach continues to create sensual and energetic paintings, most of them in flamboyant colors and using an expressive visual language till this day. Her work challenges notions of gender and the expectations of women both in the past and today. The works of Elvira Bach have been shown in prominent museums and collections such as the Guggenheim in New York, the Frankfurter Kunstkabinett, the Bayerisches Landesmuseum, and the Museum in Landerneau, France. In 2019 Galerie Kornfeld presented a solo of Elvira Bach at Frieze New York Spotlight leading to important institutional purchases in the US and China.

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