

PAULA COOPER GALLERY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CECILY BROWN

534 W 21st Street

October 27 – December 2, 2017

Opening Reception: 6 – 8pm, October 27, 2017

NEW YORK – Paula Cooper Gallery is pleased to announce a one-person exhibition of recent paintings by Cecily Brown. The exhibition is the artist's first with the gallery and will be on view at 534 West 21st Street from October 27th through December 2nd, 2017. There will be an opening reception from 6 to 8pm on Friday, October 27th.

Steeped in the academic tradition of painting, Brown draws from the compositional structure, historical motifs, and virtuosic brushwork of master painters across a diverse range of genres. Referencing these artists and other contemporary images in their entirety or by isolating specific elements, her paintings follow an iterative process of drawing and re-drawing, as an exercise in internalizing pictorial systems. Painted in a palette of bright hues to deep blacks, Brown's works are centered on the human figure, built with layers of vibrating oil paint. Her loose gestures obscure and deconstruct a singular reading as bodies break down into restless, anfractuous and elusive activity. Collectively they evoke the fleeting nature of perception and the loss implicit in memory, which Brown ascribes to a chapter from Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past: Within a Budding Grove*. As Proust's narrator longs to know a "little band" of girls on the beach, we, the viewer, desire to explicate Brown's figures, held in mutable suspense between recognition and abstraction.

In her new work, Brown presents an allegorical and turbulent vision, drawing from Théodore Géricault's iconic painting of a shipwreck, *The Raft of Medusa* (1818-19), as well as those by Eugène Delacroix. Echoing Géricault's rhythmic system of triangles, Brown composes her packed figures with robust brushstrokes that exacerbate emotional and torsional strain. Included in the exhibition will be Brown's largest painting to date, a massive triptych of a shipwreck, which introduces burkini-clad women that recall her *Madrepore* canvases from 2015. Lacking a clear horizon line, space is equivocated through entangled blues, yellows, pinks, and grays, arresting the viewer's eyes on a compressed surface-substrate matrix.

Others of Brown's paintings explore a post-deluge, fictional paradise – an aspirational incantation that exists within the human psyche. Like Baudelaire's *Les Paradis artificiels*, Brown's *Paradise* paintings indulge in moral ambiguity. Her lush greens and browns suggest an abundance of vegetation and wildlife as well as a sense of inhibition that carry an air of melancholy for this unrequited fantasy. Referencing historical art and literature as well as current political events, these new works recount a retrospective and recursive narrative with contemporary resonance.

Born in London in 1969, Cecily Brown received her BA in Fine Arts from the Slade School of Art, London, in 1993. Her work is included in renowned public collections such as the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, and the Tate Gallery, London. One-person exhibitions include "Directions: Cecily Brown," Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. (2002); MACRO, Rome (2003); Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, Madrid (2004); Museum of Modern Art, Oxford (2005); Kunsthalle Mannheim (2005–06);

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Des Moines Art Center, Iowa (2006); Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2006–07); Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2009); “Based on a True Story,” Kestner Gesellschaft, Hannover (2010) that traveled to GEM, Museum of Contemporary Art, The Hague; Galleria Civica d’Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, Turin (2014); and “Rehearsal,” The Drawing Center, New York (2016) which will travel to Santa Barbara Museum of Art, Santa Barbara, CA, in January 2018. Brown lives and works in New York.

For more information and images, please contact the gallery:
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