

# PIA FRIES

18 FEBRUARY – 27 MARCH 2021

**NEW YORK, NEW YORK – MILES McENERY GALLERY** is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by Pia Fries. *farnese* will open on 18 February at 525 West 22nd Street and will remain on view through 27 March 2021. The exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated publication featuring an essay by poet, art critic, and curator John Yau.

Fries reinterprets abstraction by sensationally combining a variety of textures and pigments to create striking and multidimensional gestural compositions. Working with a sophisticated assortment of mediums, Fries alters the way in which the materials interact on her luminous, white wooden surfaces. Her unique ability to transform pictorial space is conveyed through the textured and intricately layered elements of her paintings. The materiality of the applied paint rises from the surface, similar to a relief. By interweaving copious amounts of oil paint with screen printed images and geometric structures, Fries produces an intensely visual sense of movement for the viewer to follow.

As John Yau notes in his essay “For more than a decade, Fries has been deeply engaged with the engravings of the innovative Dutch printmaker and draftsman Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617).” In *parapylon* and *pylon*, the two series of paintings included in this exhibition, Fries considers Goltzius’s best-known engraving, *The Farnese Hercules*, 1592. Goltzius’s print provides a springboard for a series of interconnected explorations for the artist. “The dialogue she engenders delves into the art, materiality, and history of painting while subverting its dominant myth of masculinity,” states Yau.

Fries’s paintings invite close, deliberate examination. Tracing the contours of her gestures, the viewer explores the various textures and materials used to merge an array of energetic colors across a bright void of space. Yau expands on Fries’s critical use of paint, “It takes an immense amount of confidence to leave so much of the painting open and untouched; it takes even more confidence to use white paint on a white field. The interaction of figure (paint and form) and ground (unpainted surface) is an intricate and entrancing dance.” The artist arrives at a complex visual unity through varied means of applying color, unpredictable layers of imagery, and the viscous materiality of her medium.



**PIA FRIES** (b. 1955, Beromünster, Switzerland) completed her studies in studio art from 1977 to 1980 at the Lucerne University of Applied Science and Arts. From 1980 to 1986 she studied painting under Gerhard Richter at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf.

Recent solo exhibitions include “Pia Fries: picklock manual,” Talley Dunn Gallery, Dallas, TX; “FABELFAKT,” Kunstpalast Düsseldorf, Germany; “corpus transludi,” Mai 36 Galerie, Zürich, Switzerland; “parsen und module,” Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France; Gund Gallery, Kenyon College, Gambier, OH; “Pia Fries: vier winde,” Gerhard Altenbourg Award, Lindenau-Museum, Altenburg, Germany; “Hendrick Goltzius and Pia Fries: proteus and polymorphia,” Museum Kurhaus Kleve, Kleve, Germany; “nasen und neuen,” Galerie Ute Parduhn, Düsseldorf, Germany; Moss Arts Center, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA; “seascapes,” Christopher Grimes Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; “oxiponton,” Galerie Thomas, Munich, Germany, and “weisswirt und maserzug,” Kopfermann-Fuhrmann Stiftung, Düsseldorf, Germany.

## Miles McEnery Gallery

525 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011 | 511 West 22nd Street, New York, NY 10011 | 520 West 21st Street, New York, NY  
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Group exhibitions include “Diversity United. Contemporary European Art. Moscow. Berlin. Paris.” New Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, Russia, traveled to Flughafen Tempelhof, Berlin, Germany and Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France; “.CH,” Mai Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland; “small is beautiful: (A)rtschwager to (Z)ugg,” Mai 36 Galerie, Zurich, Switzerland; “Pia Fries & Liat Yossifor,” Galerie Anita Beckers, Frankfurt, Germany; “Flying Letters,” Clay Street Press, Cincinnati, OH; “Schau, ich bin blind, schau,” Hans and Monika Furer Collection, Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel, Switzerland; “Frozen Gesture: Gesture in Painting – From Roy Lichtenstein to Katharina Grosse,” Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, Germany; “MAGMA #2,” Shedhalle, Zug, Switzerland; “QUASIDACAPO: Pia Fries, Hans Brändli,” Galleria Arte-Ria, Locarno, Switzerland; “Collection of Contemporary Art,” Kunstmuseum Bern, Bern, Switzerland; “Beau Monde: Toward a Redeemed Cosmopolitanism,” (curated by Dave Hickey), Fourth International Biennial, SITE Santa Fe, Santa Fe, NM; “dAPERTutto” (curated by Harald Szeemann), La Biennale di Venezia: 48th International Exhibition of Contemporary Art, Venice, Italy.

Her work is included in numerous public and private collections including Aargauer Kunsthau, Aarau, Switzerland; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY; Detroit Institute of Art, Detroit, MI; FRAC Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand, France; Josef Albers Museum, Bottrop, Germany; Kunsthau Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland; Kunstmuseum Bern, Bern, Switzerland; Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn, Germany; Kunstmuseum Luzern, Lucerne, Switzerland; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, St. Gallen, Switzerland; Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Winterthur, Switzerland; Kunstpalast Düsseldorf, Düsseldorf, Germany; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN; Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Paris, France; Museum Folkwang, Essen, Germany; Museum Kurhaus Kleve, Kleve, Germany; Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, Germany; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, San Diego, CA; Neues Museum Nürnberg, Nuremberg, Germany and Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Stuttgart, Germany.

She is the recipient of many awards, including the Gerhard Altenbourg Award, Lindenau Museum, Altenburg, Germany; Art and Culture Award of the city of Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland; Iserlohn Art Scholarship, Villa Wessel Iserlohn, Germany; Fred-Thieler Award, Berlinische Galerie, Berlin, Germany; Studio Residency Award, Cultural Foundation Landis & Gyr Zug, London United Kingdom; Art Prize Münsterland, Münster, Germany; Bonn Art Foundation, Bonn, Germany; Nordmann Prize, Canton of Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland; Swiss Government Art Scholarship; Fine Art Grant, Canton of Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland; Graduate Scholarship, State of North-Rhine Westphalia, Germany and the Jury Prize of the Six Central Swiss Cantons, Switzerland.

Fries lives and works in Düsseldorf and Munich.

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Miles McEnery Gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM and by appointment.

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Image: *pylon AR*, 2020, Oil and silkscreen on wood, 67 x 47 1/4 inches, 170.2 x 120 cm

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