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ILIODORA MARGELLOS

Fragments of Transparencies

September 17 – October 22, 2022

Baert Gallery is pleased to present ***Fragments of Transparencies***, Iliodora Margellos' (b. 1985, Minneapolis, MN. Lives and works in Athens, Greece) first solo presentation with the gallery, on view from **September 17 to October 22, 2022**.

Greek artist Iliodora Margellos works with steel wire mesh, fiber, glass beads, and embroidery to explore the entanglements of art history, craftsmanship, and femininity. The exhibition will encompass a grouping of sculptural and mixed media pieces.

In her long-time commitment to yarn, embroidery, and weaving, Margellos subverts the formal Modernist legacies of abstract painting and a-political expressionism from a feminist perspective informed by an ontological investment in the phenomenology of physical encounter and manual labor.

A key component of the exhibition will be a suite of eleven thread-on-iron-mesh embroideries, the continuation of Margellos' ongoing series inspired by the artist's formative experience of adoption at the age of 8 months old. Prior to their separation, Margellos' birth mother took time and deliberate effort to craft a quilt in which the baby was to be swaddled—a quilt that was subsequently lost, severing the artist's only remaining thread of connection to her origin. The square, patched together, shape of a blanket or quilt as an essential proto-fetishistic symbol of childhood vulnerability and post-partum co-reliance have thus become key to Margellos' practice, reimagined as rigidly metallic—yet malleable—wire mesh screens ornately penetrated by brightly-hued islands of delicate thread.

Pondering her own motherhood to two daughters as much as the severed thread to the artist's birth mother, as allegorized in the loose threads of the baby's first blanket's tattered membranes, Margellos uses the unique properties of the medium of weaving to meditate on the notion of what the philosopher Bracha Ettinger refers to as a "matrixial borderspace"—a specifically feminine trans-subjective experience of "jointness-in-differentiating" that encompasses a weaving of affective and mental strings in a "mutating copoietic net", originary to all life prior to the painful separation of all subjects into monadic islands. Those fragmented islands of color and thread are what finds place across the newly re-bodied and humbled Color Field Modernist grids of Margellos' embroideries—severed by distance, yet immutably connected by their underlying matrix whose holes and distances are slowly obliterated by the mending stitching process itself. The artist purposefully leaves the hand-tied knots required to finish each "island" visible on the reverse side of the works—a marker of physical conclusion to the emotional labor of "untying the mental knots" of historical trauma while knitting together the woven ones at hand in a festively colored expression of a healing and liberating celebration.

Further elaborating this overarching theme, the central space of the exhibition is occupied by ***Long Quiet River***, a grouping of woven sculptural objects whose shape simultaneously suggests water drops, alien pods, and wombs. The work's title comes from Étienne Chatiliez's 1988 film *Life is a long quiet river* (*La vie est un long fleuve tranquille*) which explores the unending entanglement of the parental bond, and the ways in which adoption forever unravels its development. Expanding further on the complex duality of familiarity and alienation inherent in the condition of child-bearing, these works contribute to the exhibition's expanded meditation on a hand maiden's denigrated labor and the act of material embodiment of both formal and notional abstractions.

Iliodora Margellos was born in Minneapolis, USA in 1985. She graduated from Yale University in 2006. Between 2007 and 2009, she further expanded her artistic practice with studies in drawing at the Salzburg Academy of Fine Arts in Austria and photography at Columbia University. Among others, her work has been exhibited at the Parnassos Literary Society, Athens, Greece; the Museum of Greek Modern Culture, Athens, Greece; Dio Horia Gallery, Mykonos, Greece; Casa Internazionale delle Donne, Rome, Italy; and Louise Bourgeois' Sunday Salons, New York, NY.

The artist lives and works in Athens, Greece.