

Kay Hofmann

Senses

October 31 - November 28, 2020

François Ghebaly is proud to present *Senses*, Kay Hofmann's first solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition draws together sculptures from four decades of the stone carver's quietly powerful practice.

Kay Hofmann locates movement in stone, carving into blocks of chromatic alabaster to reveal female figures plunging in aquatic motion or swept by a great wind. Hofmann rejects the use of power tools and electric grinders in her work, opting instead for entirely hand-hewn and hand-polished surfaces. Her resulting forms carry an ancient and elemental sensibility. They are small earthy monuments to the eternal qualities of rushing wind and flowing water meeting the human form. The exhibition comprises works from 1986 through 2020, revealing the remarkable consistency of her sculptural vision through time.

Born in Green Bay, Wisconsin in 1932, Hofmann studied at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in the early 1950s, originally working in clay but soon transitioning to stone, a move partially informed by her father's work as a stonecutter specializing in tombstones and memorials. A fellowship in Paris soon followed, where she studied with influential Cubist sculptor Ossip Zadkine. There, she made carvings that would presage her life's work—elegantly rendered forms in varying states of abstraction, motifs of women constrained and liberated, figures searchingly entangled in marine flora or billowing fabrics.

Now based in Rockford, Illinois, the sculptor continues to carve daily at the age of 87. Her work has recently gained renewed prominence in Chicago following 2017 and 2019 presentations at 4th Ward Project Space and Patron Gallery. In July 2020, her work was included in François Ghebaly's group exhibition *Materia Medica* curated by Kelly Akashi. Hofmann has exhibited predominantly in the Midwest, with past showings at the Art Institute of Chicago; Lakeview Museum, Peoria, IL; Illinois State Museum, Springfield, IL; Raheer-West Museum, Manitowoc, WI; and the Chicago Public Library. *Senses* is her first solo exhibition on the West Coast.