

SUMMER SEX 1

on the spur of the moment



Summer Sex I

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July 12th - August 4th, 2017

Catalog essay by Jonathan Goodman

Lichtundfire

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The logo for Lichtundfire, featuring the brand name in a white, monospace-style font centered on a dark gray rectangular background.

LICHTUNDFIRE

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Fredi Brodmann

Sheila Elias

Augustus Goertz

Linda Griggs

Don Keene

Robert Mango

Mary Ann Moy

Alan Neider

Guy Stanley Philoche

Larry Rivers

Piril Seker

Bob Stanley

Lydia Venieri

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LICHTUNDFIRE

“Summer Sex I”: An Erotic Adventure

In the midst of yet another torrid New York City summer, and with more than a few weeks of heat still facing us, we seek the season’s eroticism as a way of matching high temperatures that offer small relief. Sex has always been summer’s biggest attraction; in the simplest equation, women and man wear less and everybody is inevitably enticed. New York in particular has always been a city of erotic play, although there are now stringent restrictions about how one conducts the negotiations intended to result in a night of diversion. Even comments complimenting a woman’s beauty are now politically suspect, given our half-century of feminism. (But desire cannot be legislated, no matter how hard we try.) “Summer Sex I,” conceived by Priska Juschka of Lichtundfire, is a very coherent show devoted to pleasure, seen from both a male and a female point of view. Most of the images we come across in this first version of the show (the second version will run from August 8- August 30) are conventionally sexy-women are scantily dressed, both men and women are photographed with an eye for the provocative, and genitalia are prominent-but there is at least one work that looks thoroughly abstract, and some of the photos are hard to read as presentations of alluring bodies.

A lot of the works date back at least a couple of generations, when the expression of desire was treated as overwhelmingly heterosexual, without the portrayal of gay sex (although certainly gay sex took place). If we look at Larry Rivers’ *For Adults Only*, an offset lithograph and silkscreen collage done in 1971, a bare-breasted woman looks back at her audience, wearing stockings and high heels but nothing else. Her pubic hair and cleft take front stage, in the center of the composition. She stands on a collaged strip of metal foil, while behind her and on her side, a sofa with soft pillows serves as the backdrop for a brazen promotion of lust. Mary Ann Moy’s *Dimitri*, a much more recent image from 2015, is a pigment print of a naked young man in mid-air, his crossed arms reaching the opposite thigh and covering his genitals. The man is handsome, with his blond hair swept back; this is eros seen from a woman’s point of view.

Linda Griggs is offering two small works from 2014, both of which are given the title *Study for Car Sex Series* part of *The First Time is Not Like Porn* contrasting pop images and fantasies of sex with, at times the misery and awkwardness of the first time sexual experience. One is a study of the gray hood of a Volvo, with imprint of two bodies pressed in the dust on its top.

The other painting shows a woman still in shirt and skirt, but with her breasts showing, as she engages in foreplay in the back of a British car. We have made a religion of sex since the Sixties, and Griggs’s images make it clear that erotic freedom, based on a fairly short history of women openly expressing their desire, holds sway across gender. Don Keene’s 2008 oil on canvas, entitled *It’s Not About Me-It’s About You*, is a brightly colored painting of a man holding a woman in his arms. The figures are recognizable, but the elements in the lower half of the painting are more complex. The woman is bare-breasted, and the man cups one of the breasts while holding the woman aloft. Eroticism is very much about seeing, and in these works and throughout the show, looking is not so much a passive as it is an active occupation.

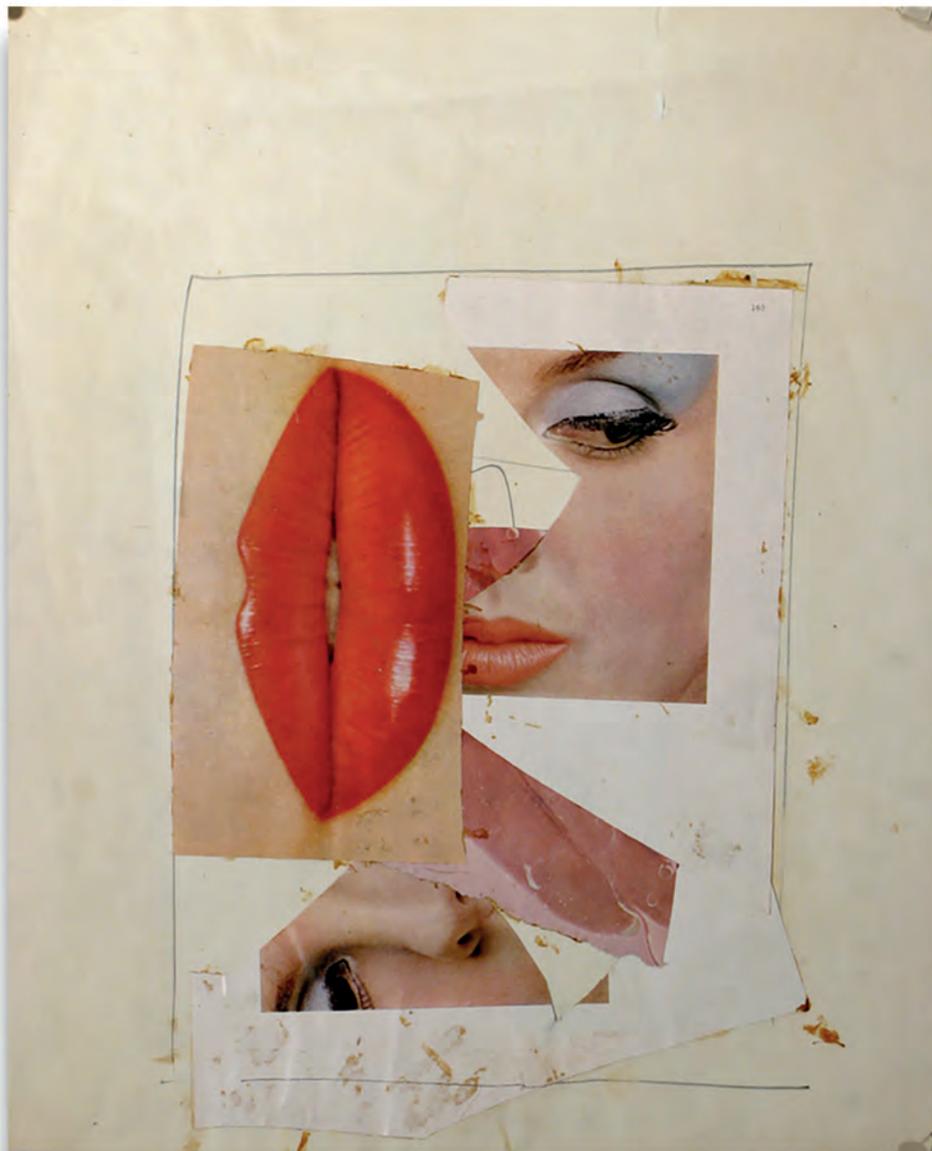
Two Dancers 8 (2016) by Alan Neider looks wholeheartedly like an abstraction. A complicated painting, with two major cutouts, the work does seem to have two figures—one is green, outlined in yellow, while the other is the pinkish red of human flesh. This piece possesses the unguarded joyousness of New York abstraction, and while it is not specifically erotic, it is generally sensual in a way that aligns the painting with the other efforts in the show. At the same time, the number “8” in the title incidentally refers to the overall configuration of the image, whose two openings do in fact result in a recognizable number 8. Guy Stanley Philoche takes part with the painting *Come Fly With Me*, in which two paper airplanes cut through space, their movements illustrated by a thin line drawn behind them. It looks like there is a white table underneath the planes, while above the white surface we see an orange wall. These images both do not deliver overtly sexual content; instead, they offer a schema that can be read as sexual, if the viewer in fact wants to see it that way. Earlier I said that eroticism is about looking, but it is also about thinking and investing the abstract with the particulars of sensuality. It looks like *Two Dancers 8* and *Come Fly With Me* appeal to an erotics of the mind.

Augustus Goertz’s three black-and-white studies of women contain a fair amount of abstraction; sometimes the viewer is not sure of what he is seeing. But there is no clarity lost in *Rear-View Mirror* (2011), in which a fully nude behind of a woman bending over from the back is raised to meet its audience directly. In the center, between the legs, one glimpses a bit of pubic hair. Fredi Brodmann’s Untitled 1990 drawing portrays a couple having intercourse, while the man, on top, says to his partner: “Either you’re very smart, or I’m very stupid.” And finally, Robert Mango’s painting, *The Sauce* (2002), depicts a skinny, large-breasted woman with coiled hair slurping a couple of spaghetti strands while an uninhibited abstract painting, done in greens and blues and reds and yellows, swirls behind her. The disparity of the three images mentioned in this paragraph demonstrates the eclecticism of the show.

Piril Seker’s *Her Fantasy* (2017) presents most of the head of a woman’s head, emphasizing her large lips reddened with lipstick, and every larger set of white teeth. She wears large feather earrings and bare-chested. Sheila Elias’s mixed-media work, a horizontal mixed-media piece from 2005 called *Aquatic Elements*, shows three pairs of legs with a background of bright blue water; the middle pair is a photo-collage of female legs in stockings. Nautical ropes and hairlike strands complicate the overall image. Finally, Bob Stanley’s photo-collage *sk #332* (1956-60) of a beautiful girl in a blue sweater, along with a bare-chested girl in the center of the composition and a photo of a chubby nude beneath it, indicates an earlier time, when photos of nude women seemed innocent and had not yet been politicized. And Lydia Venieri’s *Orion* (2002), a 22-inch glass sphere in which a white-colored male nude is more or less impaled on a tree trunk, offers a world view of the male body as a central principle of erotic energies.

“*Summer Sex I*” thus addresses America’s obsession with pleasure during the summer months. Our sanctification of youth and desire is taken up quite happily in these works, which see eros as a contemporary introduction to joy. Women are represented equally here—a male version of desire does not take over the show. It is enjoyable to revisit some of the earlier images, which do suggest a time when the male gaze was paramount. Female beauty seems endlessly seductive, then as well as now. But the real message of this exhibition is the directness with which we acknowledge desire today; very little stands between our need for sex and our willing to admit to the feeling. The exhibition delivers by delving into the immediate past, as well as the slightly more distant past, in order to find images that are both sexual and erotic at once—a condition not so easy to reify!

Jonathan Goodman, July 2017



Bob Stanley

Sk #277, 1956-60



Bob Stanley

Sk #332 (top), Sk #330 (bottom), 1956-60



Bob Stanley

Sk #281, 1956-60



Lydia Venieri

Orion, 2002



Robert Mango

The Sauce, 2002



Don Keene

It's Not About Me - It's About You, 2008



Alan Neider

Two Dancers 8, 2016



Sheila Elias

Frenzy, 2005



Sheila Elias

Aquatic Elements, 2005



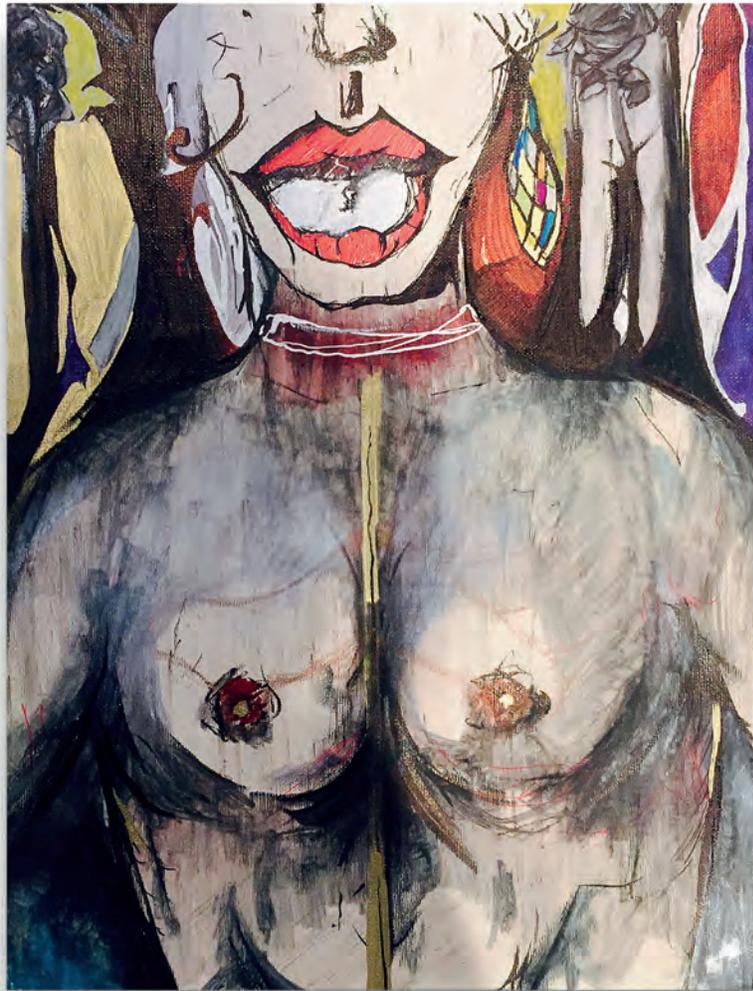
Mary Ann Moy

Dimitri, 2012



Larry Rivers

For Adults Only, 1971



Piril Seker

Her Fantasy, 2017



Guy Stanley Philoche

Come Fly With Me, 2017



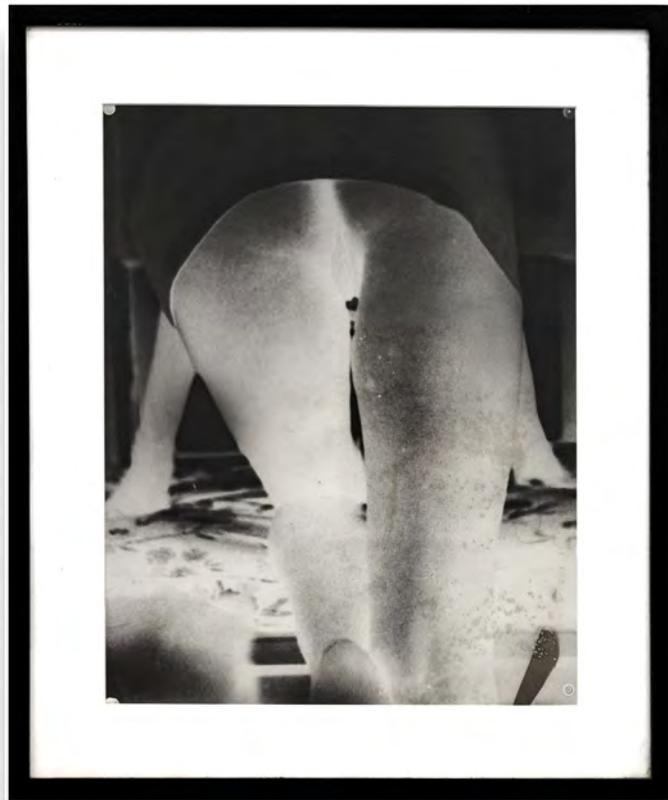
Linda Griggs

Study for Car Sex Series, 2014



Linda Griggs

Study for Car Sex Series, 2014



Augustus Goertz

Sleep (top), Rear View Mirror (bottom), 2011



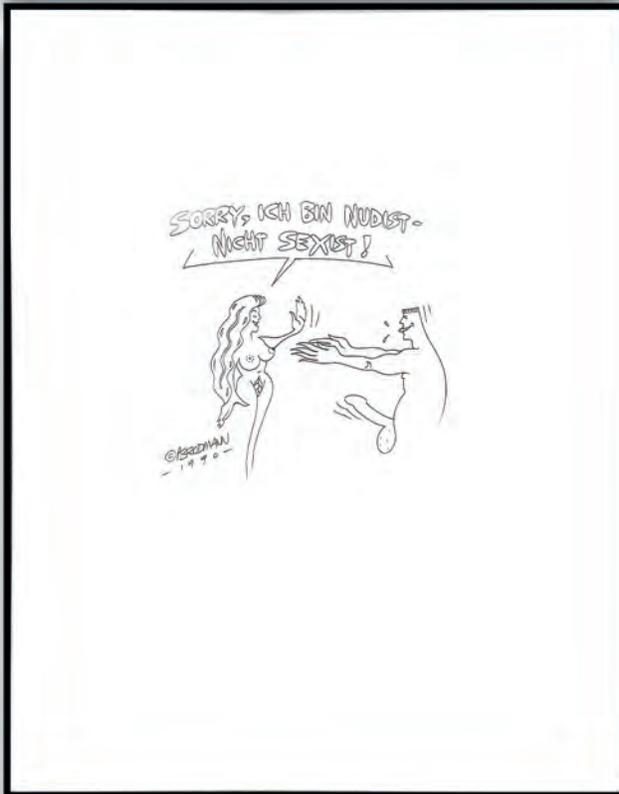
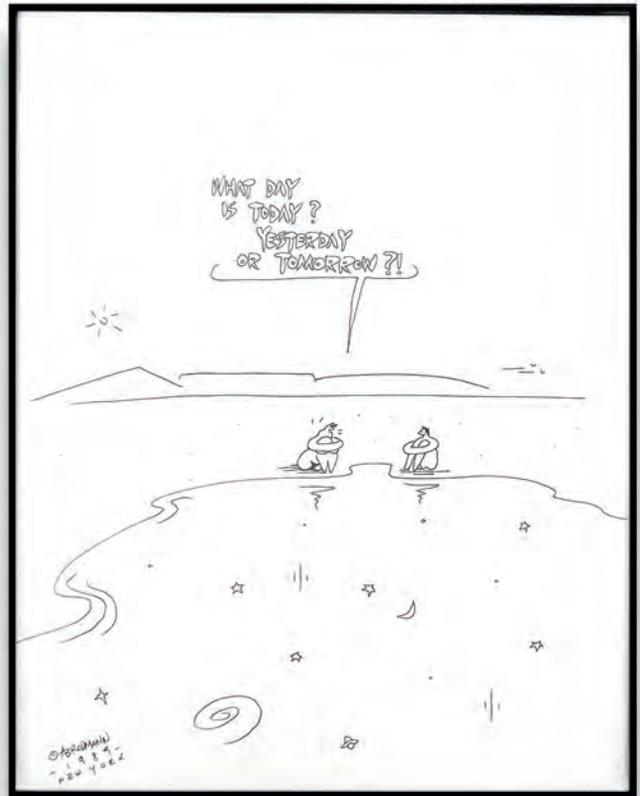
Augustus Goertz

Contemplation, 2011



Mary Ann Moy

Brian, 2005



Fredi Brodmann

(clockwise) 1988, 1989, 1989, 1990



Fredi Brodmann

The Snake Charmer, 2012



Checklist

Bob Stanley

Untitled (# sk 227), 1956-60
Mix media on paper
20 x 17 ³/₄ in

Bob Stanley

Untitled (# sk 332), 1956-60
Mix media on paper
15 x 14 ¹/₈ in

Bob Stanley

Untitled (# sk 330), 1956-60
Mix media on paper
13 ³/₄ x 12 ¹/₄ in

Bob Stanley

Untitled (# sk 281), 1956-60
Magazine photos on collage paper
12 x 9 in

Lydia Venieri

Orion, 2002
Mixed Media
22 in diameter

Robert Mango

The Sauce, 2002
Oil on Canvas
65 x 54 in

Don Keene

It's Not About Me - It's About You, 2008
Oil on Canvas
60 x 51 in

Piril Seker

Her Fantasy, 2017
Mixed media on canvas
10 x 8 in

Alan Neider

Two Dancers
Mix media
63 x 45 1/2 in

Guy Stanley Philoche

Come Fly With Me, 2017
Mix media on canvas
48 x 60 in

Sheila Elias

Frenzy, 2005
Mixed Media on canvas
10 x 24 in

Linda Griggs

Study for Car Sex Series, 2014
Oil on canvas over panel
11 1/2 x 7 in

Sheila Elias

Aquatic Elements, 2005
Mixed media on canvas
18 x 24 in

Linda Griggs

Study for Car Sex Series, 2014
Oil on canvas over panel
11 1/2 x 7 in

Mary Ann Moy

Dimitri, 2015
Pigment print on photo paper
14 x 11 in

Augustus Goertz

Sleep, 2011
B&W Photograph
20 x 16 in

Larry Rivers

For Adults Only, 1971
Offset lithograph and silkscreen in
colors with collage metal foil
Edition 42/100
29 3/4 x 18 in

Augustus Goertz

Rear View Mirror, 2011
B&W Photograph
20 x 16 in

Augustus Goertz

Contemplation, 2011

B&W Photograph

16 x 20 in

Mary Ann Moy

Brian, 2005

Pigment print on photo paper

14 x 11 in

Fredi Brodmann

1988, 1989, 1989, 1990

Pilot fineliner on paper

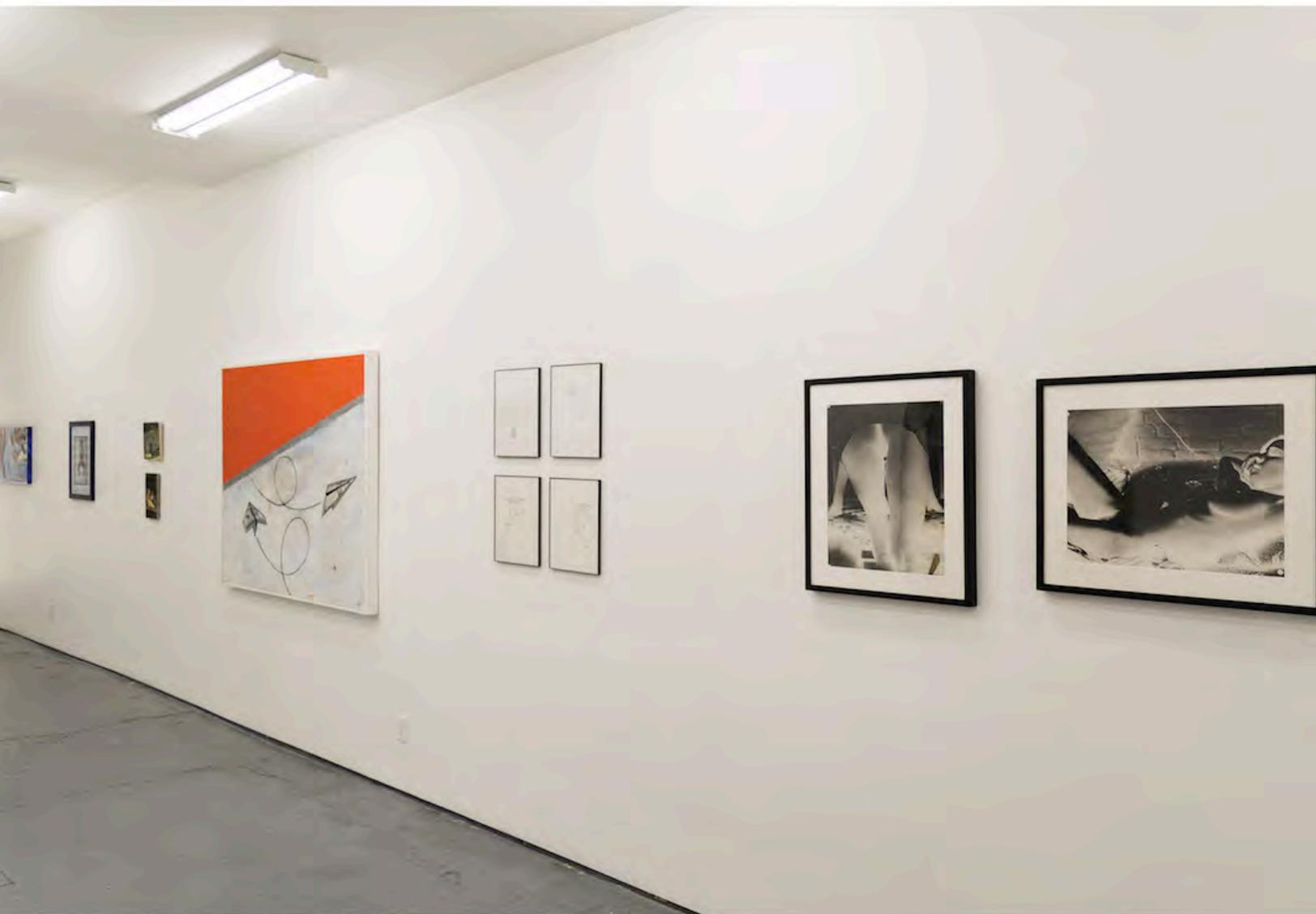
14 x 11 in

Fredi Brodmann

The Snake Charmer, 2012

Digital art print on canvas

40 x 30 in



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