

For Immediate Release

EXHIBITION OF RECENT PAINTINGS BY ARTIST AMY SILLMAN, OPENING MAY 22

May 22 - August 3, 2019

Wednesday, May 22, 6 - 8 pm: Opening Reception, *Amy Sillman: The Nervous System*

Thursday, May 23, 6 pm: Amy Sillman in conversation about the exhibition.

Both events are free and open to all.

(April 2019)—The Arts Club of Chicago (201 E. Ontario Street) is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings by Amy Sillman, opening with a public reception on May 22, 2019. Sillman (b. Detroit, 1955) returns to the Midwest for her first exhibition in the city of Chicago, during a thrilling crescendo in her three-decade long career.

Featuring new and recent painting, *Amy Sillman: The Nervous System* calls upon abstract and figurative motifs to address the material and emotional conditions of being human in fraught political times. A roughly sixty-foot, two-sided hanging frieze of printed and hand-painted works on paper provides the focal point of the exhibition. On one side, a recurring figure drags itself across the pages, showing its vulnerability, grief, and fortitude in the face of earth's gravity and societal pressures. The other side deploys pungent color, patterning, and exuberant mark-making to convey the artist's less explicit understandings of a body struggling to exist.

Large-scale paintings like *In Illinois*, (2017-2018) that hint at the artist's deep connections to Chicago, allude to personal points of reference in the rich iconography that has been developed over time in her zines and comics, as well as oil paintings and works on paper. A wailing figure in a fetal crouch conveys the pathos of this painting, which shows two figures stacked upon each other and connected by a seeming umbilical cord. The exhibition further features an elegiac quartet of new paintings entitled *Blues for Omar*, 2019. Other works, with a lighter touch, veer upon the comical with bright patches of saturated color or whimsical motifs like pomegranates, clocks, heads, or onions.

Together, the overall installation of the galleries reflects the notion of a “nervous system” referenced in the exhibition's title. It refers at once to stressed social networks and the corporeal network of neurons—cells in the body that operate by electrical charge between the mental and physical realms of being.

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Amy Sillman (born in 1955 in Detroit, MI) lives and works in New York City. Primarily a painter, but actively engaging with various side interests (such as animation, language, and printmaking), Sillman weaves together a formal and discursive language, one that both honors and questions painting's history and language. Ultimately what interests her the most is transformation and change. With a slow process of building and destroying, and with humor, defiance, and an archeological sensibility, she digs toward formal transformation and the not-[quite]-known. Her work has been widely shown and collected at private and public institutions in the US and Europe, including MoMA, The Whitney Museum, The Drawing Center, The Brooklyn Museum, LA MoCA, Portikus in Frankfurt, Lenbachhaus and the

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Brandhorst Museum in Munich, the Moderna Museet in Stockholm, and The Tate Modern, London. She has been the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships, including a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2001 and, most recently a 2014 residency fellowship at The American Academy in Rome. Sillman's traveling mid-career survey show and monograph *one lump or two* opened at the ICA Boston in 2013, curated by Helen Molesworth. Sillman's most recent solo show, "Landline," was on view at Camden Arts Centre in London until January 6, 2019. A group show organized by Hayward Touring, called "Hand Drawn Action Packed," will also continue into 2019. A monograph is also planned for 2019, published by Lund Humphries Publishers, London, with a text by author/curator Valerie Smith. Sillman received a BFA from School of Visual Art, NY, in 1979 and an MFA from Bard College in 1995. She is represented in New York by Gladstone Gallery, and currently holds a Professorship at the Staedelschule in Frankfurt, Germany.

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