



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 28, 2016

VROOM VROOM BEEP BEEP
A GROUP EXHIBITION
CELEBRATING AMERICA'S CAR CULTURE

January 12-February 24, 2017

Featuring Painting and Photography by Charles Buckley, John Conn, Victor Honigsfeld, Valeri Larko, Beñat Iglesias López, Carolyn Monastra, Maria Passarotti and Ruth Shively

OPENING RECEPTION: THURSDAY, JANUARY 12, 6-8 PM

We are pleased to announce the opening of **Vroom Vroom Beep Beep**, a group exhibition featuring paintings and photographs by Charles Buckley, John Conn, Victor Honigsfeld, Valeri Larko, Beñat Iglesias López, Carolyn Monastra, Maria Passarotti and Ruth Shively.

The car is so much more than a machine that moves people from point A to point B. It is a symbol of freedom, an emblem of America's pioneering spirit, a status symbol, a mark of one's wealth, and sometimes, a sad substitute for a home or a temporary place to lay one's head. In addition to driving (pardon the pun) the nation's economy and commerce, the car has played an important role in American culture – high and low—making appearances in advertisements, pop songs, film and fine art.

Second only to the home, the car is the biggest expenditure for many families in the US. In 2013, there were 255.8 million registered passenger vehicles in the country, just behind China. Despite the growth in a car culture nationwide, The New York Times recently reported that trends might be turning. In "Automakers Prepare for an America That's Over the Whole Car Thing," (Automobiles, Dec 22, 2016), reporter Neal E. Boudette attributes novel technologies such as ride-hailing services like Uber, advances in self-driving cars, expansion of light rail services in cities like LA and Miami, to shifting the notion that car

ownership is essential. Boudette goes on to conclude that younger generations may no longer consider owning a car a goal or a necessity. Perhaps a growing awareness of climate change and how one's carbon footprint may affect it may also be contributing to younger drivers opting out of car ownership.

In *Vroom Vroom*, we take a look at the role of the car in a range of contemporary art, from the nostalgic depictions of vintage cars by **Charles Buckley** and **Ruth Shively**, to the paintings set in urban and rural landscapes by **Beñat Iglesias López**, and **Victor Honigsfeld** and the hyper realist cityscapes painted en plein air by **Valeri Larko**.

The selection of photographs by **Carolyn Monastra** and **Maria Passarotti** plays on humor and irony and feature several self-portraits. Highlights include Monastra sitting in a sand trap, surrounded by sand toys, while her golf cart idles nearby. Passarotti offers us a curious image of woman in her suburban kitchen gazing out of the window, while a commuter car sits in the driveway. A man, perhaps her husband, sits in the driver's seat with a faraway look.

John Conn's 2015-16 series of photographs of vintage cars in Cuba reflect how the island nation is a time capsule for American cars, manufactured before the US embargo in 1960. Conn's photographs are courtesy of Elisa Contemporary Art.

ARTIST BIOS

Charles Buckley received an MFA from Hunter College a BFA in painting from California College of Arts in Oakland. Buckley's progression paintings and drawings, often on multiple canvases, are an investigation of the construction of narrative and progress. Rendered in bright colors and evocative of a classic Pop Art style, Buckley draws inspiration for his figures and objects from mid-20th century manuals and textbooks. Buckley lives in Brooklyn, NY.

Bronx photographer **John Conn** got his start as a Marine Combat photographer, and later earned his BFA at the School of Visual Arts in New York. His work has appeared in *The New York Times Sunday Magazine*, Time/Life Books, IMAX Films, *Village Voice*, *Human Rights*

Magazine, Shutterbug Magazine, LensWork Magazine, Nikon World and many others. Conn's iconic Subway series, shot between the mid 1970's and 1982 in New York City, is part of the permanent collection of The New York Historical Society and Hoboken Historical Museum. His work has been exhibited at the Bronx Museum of the Arts and Bronx Documentary Center. The artist is represented by Elisa Contemporary Art.

Victor Honigsfeld has been painting for over 25 years. He studied at the Art Students League of New York and the Ted Jacobs École Albert DeFois in France where he honed the skill of "restructured" realism. Over the past few years, his style has evolved to encompass both the art of urban *en plein air* as well as traditional studio work. Honigsfeld has traveled extensively through Europe, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East studying the work of the old and new Masters. He has exhibited in the US and Europe.

Valeri Larko is best known for her densely painted landscapes of the urban fringe, all of which she paints on location. She is attracted to the jumble of rusting industrial sites, aging infrastructure and funky waterways that populated the outskirts of America's urban centers and the stories these places can tell. Larko's paintings have been exhibited in numerous museums and galleries in the US and Europe. Recent solo exhibitions include the Bronx Museum, Hampden Gallery, University of MA, Amherst and Lyons Wier Gallery, NYC. In 2004, Ms Larko moved from her long-time residence in Northern New Jersey to New Rochelle, New York, and since then has been painting in the outer boroughs of New York City, primarily in the Bronx but also in Brooklyn and Queens.

Beñat Iglesias López, a native of Spain, lives and works in New York City. He received an MFA from the UPV University in Bilbao, as well as completed a 4 year certificate program in Painting and Sculpture from the Arts Student League of New York. His work has been exhibited at prestigious fine art institutions nationally and internationally, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in Tokyo, The World Art Museum in Beijing, Shanghai Art Museum, The Butler Institute of American Art Museum and the National Academy Museum of New York, among others.

Carolyn Monastra was raised in Cleveland, Ohio. She received a BA in English Literature from Fordham University and an MFA in photography from Yale University. For the past 15 years her work has focused on creating and discovering mystery in the natural world. A number of artist residencies have afforded inspirational environments in which to create her work. After a residency in Iceland, Monastra was motivated to begin her current project, The Witness Tree, to honor and preserve places affected by climate change. Over the past four years, Monastra has visited 19 US states, 17 countries, and every continent documenting and researching climate change. In addition to several awards resulting from her work in climate change, Monastra's work has been widely exhibited around the world, and is in the Marguiles Collection in Miami. Monastra lives in Brooklyn, NY.

Maria Passarotti graduated in 2000 with a BFA from the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York. Her most recent photographs are inspired by the intersection of nature and humanity. Passarotti's photographs are often absent of people, evoking a haunting human presence through details such as electrical wires, roads and hints of domestic life. The results are stunning, stage-like environments, which appear to be happened upon, illuminated by street lamps or headlights. The artist lives and works in Tappan, New York.

Ruth Shively was born in Hastings, Nebraska and received her BFA from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions throughout the US. Shively was recently awarded an artist residency at Chateau Orquevaux in Champagne Ardenne, France for the summer of 2018. One of Shively's paintings was recently pictured in an Ian McEwan novel, *Nusschale (Nutshell)*. The artist lives and works in Portland, Oregon.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Susan Eley Fine Art was founded in the spring of 2006 by Susan Eisner Eley as a salon-style gallery. Situated in an Upper West Side townhouse in Manhattan, the Gallery offers an intimate viewing experience, contrary to the more formal presentations of art in typical

white box galleries. Eley opened the Gallery to attract a new, untapped audience for contemporary art and to provide regular gallerygoers with a fresh, alternative way to enjoy art. The Gallery focuses on contemporary art by emerging and mid-career artists, who work in a range of media, from paint to photography to sculpture and print. Solo and group exhibitions showcase abstract and figurative work from a diverse body of artists from the US, Asia, Latin America and Europe. Gallery artists are dynamic, active professionals, who produce strong bodies of work that constantly shift and evolve.

In addition to the exhibition program, the Gallery regularly hosts literary and poetry salons, panel discussions and our special series, "Collector Talks. The Gallery has participated in art fairs throughout the US, in Miami, Houston, San Francisco and New York, and abroad in Toronto. In the past few years the Gallery has developed a strong online presence marketing and selling art through platforms such as artsy.net and 1stdibs.com.

Eley has a BA in Art History from Brown University and an MA in Visual Arts Administration from NYU.