

The artwork is a complex, layered composition of organic, flowing forms. It features a rich palette of earthy tones: deep browns, vibrant greens, and warm yellows, set against a background of textured, muted blues and oranges. The forms resemble currents, waves, and perhaps stylized trees or roots, creating a sense of movement and interconnectedness. The overall style is reminiscent of mid-century modern abstract art, with a focus on naturalistic patterns and textures.

GRAY

EVELYN STATSINGER  
*Currents*

Apr 8 - Jun 18, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## *Evelyn Statsinger: Currents*

Apr 8 - Jun 18, 2022

Curated by Dan Nadel

GRAY New York

1018 Madison Ave, 2nd Fl

New York, NY 10075

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*“[For] fifteen years, I have intently watched [the] daily life of plants and animals in both the forests and the fields... Bits and pieces of specially observed things begin to represent the whole, and juxtapositions of real things make imaginary combinations. Combinations are open and ambiguous to interpretation, so that the viewer may wander in the same state of grace as the painter.” – Evelyn Statsinger<sup>1</sup>*

GRAY presents the work of American artist Evelyn Statsinger (1927-2016) in the solo exhibition, *Currents*. Curated by New York-based writer and curator Dan Nadel, *Currents* features Statsinger’s paintings and drawings from the 1980s and 90s, a period in which she developed her most immersive and otherworldly compositions. The exhibition opens at GRAY New York with a public reception on Friday, April 8, from 6-8 PM, and will be on view through June 18, 2022.

Evelyn Statsinger was an artist deeply informed by her impressions of the natural world. Born in Brooklyn in 1927, Statsinger relocated to Chicago in the 1940s to attend the School of the Art Institute. During this time, Statsinger became acquainted with a group of artists known as the Monster Roster and received mentorship and support from notable Chicago figures including Katherine Kuh, Kathleen Blackshear, and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. In the years that followed, Statsinger began to develop her own unique visual language, relinquishing identifiable forms in favor of surreal compositions based on her observations in nature.

In 1972, Statsinger moved her Chicago studio to a rural 1890s schoolhouse in Allegan, Michigan. The remote property, nestled within the sand dunes and woodlands on the eastern shores of Lake Michigan,

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<sup>1</sup> Evelyn Statsinger, Statement, Jan Cicero Gallery, Chicago, Illinois, January 11, 1991. Evelyn Statsinger Cohen Trust Archives.

served as the artist's home base and allowed Statsinger to closely observe nature in all its orders of magnitude. "When Statsinger would return to downtown Chicago, she imported the outdoors to the city by bringing with her those specially observed bits of matter," curator Dan Nadel reflects in his essay for the exhibition. "She collected seed pods, shells, twigs, leaves, and stones, which she arranged carefully in her studio. She could go macro or micro with these specimens—making them a subject or finding new details within them."

At times mysterious, and eluding definitive classification, Statsinger's intricate compositions describe vast, ethereal worlds that evoke the biological systems and cellular structures of plants as if viewed under a microscope. As art historian Dennis Adrian observed, "The forms which the artist favors often seem drawn from microscopic plant life, the exotic fauna of the sea or from the layered and crystalline structures of the earth itself. Statsinger's subtle and reverberating colors make ingenious use of unexpected complements and harmonic arrangements in a way that brings to mind the marvelous chromatics of odd biological specimens or rare minerals."<sup>2</sup>

**PUBLICATION** | To accompany the exhibition, GRAY is pleased to announce the release of [Evelyn Statsinger: Currents](#), featuring an essay by curator Dan Nadel, color illustrations of the works in the exhibition, and a detailed biography on the artist.

**ABOUT EVELYN STATSINGER** | Evelyn Statsinger (1927-2016) was born in Brooklyn, New York, and lived and worked in Chicago. While in New York, Statsinger studied at the Art Students League. Relocating to Chicago in the 1940s, she worked at the University of Chicago and went on to receive her degree from the School of the Art Institute in 1949. Statsinger depicted her experiences of the natural world through drawing, painting, and sculpture. Her early drawings, characterized by their clean lines and all-over patterns, drew the interest of luminary artists and museum curators, including IIT Director Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe and Art Institute of Chicago curators Katharine Kuh and Carl Schiewind, and led to solo exhibitions at the Art Institute in 1952 and 1957. She was frequently included in discussions of the Monster Roster school of Chicago artists because of the distorted figures present in her early work, as well as the later, broader conversation around Chicago Imagism. Throughout her life, however, Statsinger made work that was profoundly individual and fiercely independent. In her mature work, she abandoned recognizable or figural forms in favor of fantastical visions abstracted from nature. Statsinger worked across a variety of media creating complex psychological and colorful compositions that balance abstraction, representation, and fantasy. Statsinger's work can be found in numerous public art collections including: Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois; Elmhurst University Art Collection, Elmhurst, Illinois; Illinois State Museum, Springfield, Illinois; National Art Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Illinois; Museum of Graphic Art, New York, New York; Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Richland Community College, Decatur, Illinois; Rockford Art Museum,

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<sup>2</sup> Dennis Adrian, *Chicago: Some Other Traditions*, exh. cat. (Madison, WI: Madison Art Center, 1983).

Rockford, Illinois; Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York; and Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts.

**ABOUT DAN NADEL** | Dan Nadel is the Curator at Large for the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art at the University of California, Davis, where he has organized exhibitions on Kathy Butterly, Mary Heilmann, and William T. Wiley. Nadel is the editor of several books, including *Peter Saul: Professional Artist Correspondence*; *The Collected Hairy Who Publications, 1966–1969*; and *It's Life as I See It: Black Cartoonists in Chicago, 1940–1980*. He has also curated exhibitions including *What Nerve! Alternative Figures in American Art: 1960 to the Present*; *Suellen Rocca: Bare Shouldered Beauty*; *Gertrude Abercrombie*; and, most recently, *Chicago Comics: 1960s to Now*, at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. Nadel, a 2021–2022 Fellow at the Leon Levy Center for Biography at the Graduate Center, CUNY, is currently at work on the biography of underground comic artist Robert Crumb (Scribner, 2024).

**ABOUT GRAY** | GRAY is a globally recognized team of art professionals devoted to fostering the development of historically important artists' careers and to building outstanding art collections. Founded in 1963, GRAY has built its reputation as a resource for Modern, Post-War, and Contemporary art with prominent private and institutional clients worldwide. Known for producing critically acclaimed exhibitions and programming from its galleries in Chicago and New York, GRAY represents a roster of internationally recognized artists such as McArthur Binion, Jim Dine, Torkwase Dyson, Theaster Gates, David Hockney, Rashid Johnson, Alex Katz, Ellen Lanyon, Jaume Plensa, Leon Polk Smith, and Evelyn Statsinger.

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