

MARTOS GALLERY

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Servane Mary, *Untitled (IRA Lavender, Frances Farmer)*, 2011
pigment printed silk, 69 ½ x 88 inches

God Dies

Servane Mary

February 16 - March 17, 2012

Opening Reception

February 16, 6 - 8 pm

540 West 29th Street

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Martos Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new works by Servane Mary.

From a large scale flag-like triptych suspended from the ceiling to the smallest piece in the show, a photographic glass plate wrapped in a woman's tights, Servane Mary depicts iconic female figures from actors to former activists, thus measuring the legacy of a 1960s and 1970s counterculture. *God Dies* is named after a piece in the show and relates to an essay that the late actor Frances Farmer wrote while in high school.

From a forthcoming catalogue of Mary's work;

"Servane Mary treats the silk material in her new series of works like the retina of the eye. Often burning, in a solvent transfer process, her images right into its fragile surface. The appropriated images, exclusively of proto-feminists – including the late actor Jean Seberg, whose haircut started its own veritable gender identity revolution – femme-fatales, and unapologetic bad girls – many of these from the 1960s and 1970s – all benefit from the technique. There is a contrast between the women, the printing technique, and the silk itself (with its inferences of femininity) that Mary exploits intuitively.

A portion of the works have been exposed to the photo chemical for too long, and as a result the images and fabric have been burnt black. Suggesting the turbulent late '60s (with its bra and draft card burnings) and even the gruesome stakes of Salem, these burnt works perhaps mesh medium and message most poignantly. In fact, many of the women in Mary's series were subject to their own proverbial witch hunts. Jane Fonda (who publicly supported the Vietnamese Communists), Jean Seberg (who supported the Black Power movement), and former Black Panther leader Elaine Brown all found themselves the subjects of trials and blacklists. Other far less political figures, like the 'troubled' actor Frances Farmer (a kind of precursor to Marilyn Monroe and all of the tragic starlets that have since come and gone) remind us that even the seemingly apolitical act of self-destruction has never been equally acceptable among the sexes. Men are forever 'bad boys', while women are 'troubled.' Little on this front has changed.

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Occasionally, Mary stretches the pastel-colored silk over panels of mirror, allowing the mesh fabric to tear at the sharp edges of the glass and for the viewer to, just barely, catch a fleeting glimpse of their own reflection through the fabrics weave and the surface image (suggesting a Gaze theory conundrum.) At other times, the artist stitches panels together into curtains of frayed pastel-colored silks that suggest the entrance to some acid-dropping, gun-toting sorority. Ultimately, Mary's series is an act of reclamation, an attempt to re-burn, through contrary techniques, the images of some once equally contrary figures, back onto the retina of a new public."

Servane Mary lives and works in New York. Recent group and solo exhibitions include *Sprung* curated by Rochelle Goldberg and Bozidar Brazda, Chelsea Hotel, New York; *Artists for Women for Women International*, Gagosian Gallery, Britannia Street, London; *Helter/Helter*, Anne de Villepoix Gallery, Paris and *Black Dawn*, Maisonneuve Gallery, Paris.

For further information please contact Martos Gallery at info@martosgalleries.com or 212-560-0670