

Editions '14

by Micaela Giovannotti

HEIDE FASNACHT Nothing Lasts Forever

In the aftermath of the September 11th events, we questioned how the impact of those dramatic, indelibly imprinted images from the media coupled with our personal experiences would transform our collective imagery. The hope of entering a new millennium with less war and more peace was immediately dismissed and the delicate balance between freedom and security had to be revisited.

Artist Heide Fasnacht's studio is in the vicinity of the tragic site and her life was profoundly disrupted. Indeed, only the night before, she was at the World Trade Center site attending a dance program produced by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council - an organization that would later have a crucial role in revitalizing the post-September 11th cultural landscape in downtown Manhattan.

Ironically, since the 90's, she had been renowned for capturing a moment in time of explosions and implosions of disparate sorts through graphite drawings, sculptures and multi-media installations. The subject matter of the works widely ranged from a sneezing outburst, to a building detonation, and a natural cataclysm. Furthermore, the works' unconventional materials and radiating compositions confronted the viewer with the urgency that any disaster and its inherent energy emanate.

After the 9/11 tragic events, Ms. Fasnacht's interest in natural and artificial forms of destruction came to a halt, and for the next ten years she had to reconsider the course of her creative practice. Afterward, also inspired by the documentary, *The Rape of Europa* by Richard Berge, Nicole Newnham and Bonni Cohen, her work took a fresh direction. The groundbreaking film narrates the theft and destruction of old master works during World War II, and the subsequent recovery by brave American and European art historians and

curators. The reckless destruction and dilapidation of monuments and artworks throughout history, from the Roman Empire through Nazi-driven World War II, and finally to the American wars in the Middle East, consequentially took center stage in Ms. Fasnacht's investigation.

For her recent print project, the artist searched the Internet for pre-photographic documentation of historical acts of iconoclasm from burnings, bombings, and other war-related incidents, then digitally manipulated them. While magnifying some of the images, she realized that part of the detailed information provided would likely be lost. Indeed, the final result presented an enhanced, seemingly aged aura of blurry lines, faded colors and decayed elements, evoking greatly damaged artworks begging to be restored.

Adding a further symbolic scrim, Ms. Fasnacht later employed both geometric and organic elements to change the representational images and digitally perforate them, as in her print *Ephesus Book Burning* (2013), titled after the appropriated woodcut from Gustavé Doré, in which a group of sorcerers burn their pagan books, while Paul preaches in Ephesus. Inserting images of corrosive cavities obtained from depictions of bullet holes and crab excavations to alter the appearance of the original, the artist metaphorically hinted to the devastation of the iconoclastic episode. As Davide Gamboni asserts in his book *The Destruction of Art: Iconoclasm and Vandalism since the French Revolution* (2007), highly regarded by the artist, "Iconoclasts are presented as blind not only to the value of what they destroy, but to the very meaning of the acts they perform." To this extent, Ms. Fasnacht explains that even 9/11 could be read as an iconoclastic act.

Opposite page:

Heide Fasnacht

Triumph of Titus, 2013

Archival inkjet print on Hahnemühle German Etching
310 gsm

14" x 19" image, 19" x 23" sheet

Edition of 8, with 2 Artist's Proofs, 1 Archive Proof, 1
Display Proof, and 1 Printer's Proof

Master Printer: Erik Hougen

Assisting Printers: Keigo Takahashi, Laura Charlton

Arch of Titus, 2013

Archival inkjet print on Hahnemühle German Etching
310 gsm, mounted on Stonehenge Black 250 gsm

10.5" x 19" image, 15.5" x 24" sheet

Edition of 8, with 2 Artist's Proofs, 1 Archive Proof, 1
Display Proof, and 1 Printer's Proof

Master Printer: Erik Hougen

Assisting Printers: Keigo Takahashi, Laura Charlton



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