

JACK FISCHER GALLERY

BELLA FELDMAN *WAR TOYS, fire and fury*

February 17 - March 31, 2018
Opening reception: February 17, 5 – 7 p.m.



Spite, 2015, glass and steel, 15" x 30" x 10".

Jack Fischer Gallery is pleased to present *War Toys, fire and fury*, the first solo exhibition with the gallery by Oakland based artist **Bella Feldman**.

For more than fifty years, Bella Feldman has been working in various mediums, mostly known for creating sculptures fashioned from wood, steel, blown and carved glass, and occasionally found objects. Addressing themes such as sexuality and war, Feldman creates what the critic Harold Rosenberg referred to as 'anxious objects'. "I always thought my work wasn't didactic, but then I realized my work was anxious. It was based on pessimism that humans would fail and optimism that some organism would arise," she says. "Black humor helps me survive." Her interest in dichotomies such as force and fragility, and balance and instability, reflects the physicality of her work as well as the subject matter.

In *War Toys, fire and fury*, the artist exhibits her ongoing series of sculptures that highlight the ridiculousness of war. The first series, *War Toys*, began in the 1990s inspired by a speech of former president George Bush Sr at the time of the First Gulf War, in which he praised the virtues of deadly weapons called "Patriot Missiles" in an almost erotic tone. These sculptures consist of pet-sized aggressive, somewhat humorous, machines made of steel, purposely small scaled, giving a sense of superiority to the viewer. The second series, *War Toys Redux*, was created around

the time of the Iraq war in 2003, using blown glass and steel, approaching fantastical science fiction weapons. As with the earlier series, this work fetishizes war and its weaponry almost into the sex toy category. Feldman addresses society's preoccupation with war and our inability to distinguish between what is real and what is not.

Two larger scale sculptures from the *Reach* series will be on view in the atrium at Minnesota Street Project. This work has a palpable optimism in direct contrast to the *War Toy* series exhibited in the gallery space.

A prolific artist, a long time professor at California College of the Arts, and a pioneer among women sculptors, Feldman has marked her position in the California art scene. Feldman's work remind us that nothing is invincible, and life, like her sculptures, can be seemingly tough and witty, but delicate and meaningful. Her work is a constant reminder of the absurdity of our times.

This exhibition will coincide with *Contraption: Rediscovering California Jewish Artists* at the Contemporary Jewish Museum, a group show presenting the work of California artists of Jewish heritage, opening February 22, 2018.



Left to right: *Lift*, steel, 99" x 15" x 20". *On Point*, 84" x 36" x 18"

Bella Feldman works out of her studio in Oakland, California and is a Professor Emeritus at the California College of the Arts. She has won numerous awards for her work, including a National Endowment for the Arts in 1986, as well as receiving a Distinguished Artist Award from Kala Institute at Berkeley and a Women's Caucus for the Arts Award. Feldman has exhibited nationally and internationally at museums and galleries including Musee des Beaux Arts, Lausanne, Switzerland; the Alternative Museum, New York; Habatat Galleries, Chicago; Jan Baum Gallery in Los Angeles, CA; the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco; the Oakland Museum of California, etc. Her sculptures are in various private and public collections, such as at the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco, CA; the di Rosa Collection, Napa, CA; the

Oakland Museum of California; the Berkeley Art Museum, among others. A fifty-year survey of her work took place at The Richmond Art Center, Richmond, CA in 2013. She holds a BFA from Queens College, NY and an MFA from San Jose State University, San Jose, CA.

VISIT US AT:

Jack Fischer Gallery
311 Potrero Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94103
+1 415 522 1178
Tues. - Sat. 11:00 - 5:30 pm,
and by appointment.

Jack Fischer Gallery
Minnesota Street Project
1275 Minnesota Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
Tues. - Sat. 11:00 - 5:30 pm
*First Saturdays open until 8 pm.