

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Locks Gallery
T 215-629-1000/F 215-629-3868
info@locksgallery.com

A Golden Age

January 9 through February 14, 2015

Reception:

Friday, February 6, 5:30–7:30 pm

Gallery hours:

Tue–Sat: 10 am–6 pm

Locks Gallery is pleased to present *A Golden Age*, a group exhibition on view January 9 through February 21, 2015. There will be a reception on Friday, February 6th from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. Artists in the exhibition include Lynda Benglis, Bryan Hunt, Jane Irish, Virgil Marti, Roberto Matta, Louise Nevelson, Pat Steir, Rob Wynne, Yeessookyung, and Robert Rahway Zakanitch.

Nearly half a century of gallery artists have examined, celebrated, and critiqued the value of this element in unique ways. The work begins in the 1960s with Chilean artist Roberto Matta's king and queen bronze abstract figurines and a rare gold wood assemblage sculpture by Louise Nevelson. After working at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida, Bryan Hunt's groundbreaking and gravity-defying 1970s *Airships* were hailed as "unthinkable" forms by critics. Through the 1980s and '90s, Lynda Benglis used gold symbolically in her work as both a celebration and critique—her 1980 *Kaudi* takes its name from the cowrie shell, both worshiped and used as currency in different cultures. Robert Rahway Zakanitch, one of the founders of the Pattern and Decoration Movement, used gold in his paintings as he continued to re-imagine decorative motifs in the 1990s. Contemporary works by gallery artists include gold glazed ceramic vases by Jane Irish, looking glasses and furniture by Virgil Marti, new metallic poured paintings by Pat Steir, whimsical jewelry in animal and insect motifs by Rob Wynne, and the acclaimed gold-mended *Translated Vase* series by Korean artist Yeessookyung.

In a recent 2014 interview with writer Eugenia Lapteva, the artist Lynda Benglis remarked, "I question the economic value of the dollar and the gold, the idea of the gold standard in the context of where I am operating. I've always questioned the value of everything at that



Roberto Matta, *Le Roi et la reine*, 1960, pair of gilt bronze sculptures, edition of 150, 16 x 3 x 3 inches

[continued on reverse]

600 Washington Square South
Philadelphia PA 19106
tel 215.629.1000 fax 215.629.3868
info@locksgallery.com
www.locksgallery.com

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particular time—be it metals, the value of gold or art, but it was totally in the context of the structure of making the art, that is, the material, the form and everything we've been talking about. The pop artists were doing the same thing." Louise Nevelson's symbolic use of the material in gold spray paint evoked materialism and vice for the artist. In her self-proclaimed "baroque period" she made a group of rare gold wood sculptures in her pioneering assemblage style that similarly questioned the material.

Conversely, for an artist such as Pat Steir the material has an exalted aura, reflecting light and conveying a space for meditative contemplation in abstraction. In a 2011 interview with *Brooklyn Rail* editor Phong Bui stated, "That's what I was looking for in these paintings with the bright metallic panel and the dark panel beside them. What do the light and the dark open up or hide? What opens and what hides? And I'm really thinking in terms of the human spirit. What hides in the human spirit?" Pat Steir's metallic washes in her latest split-paintings use metallic pigments to further her material experimentations with chemistry and chance in her signature pouring process. Meanwhile, Rob Wynne's striking jewelry pieces of snakes, spiders, and octopi, made from real 18K gold, will be on view for the first time at the gallery.

This installation presents a diverse array of gold in contemporary art, surveying the alchemical, material, and symbolic interpretations specific to these artists.