



48 WALKER ST & 291 GRAND ST | JAN 10 – FEB 8, 2025

Behind the Bedroom Door

Zanele Muholi, *Bona II*, Charlottesville, Virginia, 2015, Gelatin Silver Print, Image and paper size: 11 3/8 x 19 5/8 in. (28.9 x 49.8 cm). Courtesy of the artist and Yancey Richardson.

James Cohan is pleased to present *Behind the Bedroom Door*, a group exhibition that explores the private realms where intimacy and solitude share space with the inner life of dreams and fantasies. The exhibition features historical and contemporary artists working across painting, photography, sculpture, video and sound to plumb the depths of the unconscious, uncover hidden dimensions, and explore mythology and transformation. *Behind the Bedroom Door* will be on view at the gallery's 48 Walker Street and 291 Grand Street locations from January 10 through February 8, 2025. **The gallery will host an opening reception on Friday, January 10, from 4-6 PM at 291 Grand Street and 6-8 PM at 48 Walker Street.**

In *Behind the Bedroom Door*, interior scenes serve as portals to inner landscapes. Depictions of doors serve as potent symbols of opening and closing: a threshold we pause before, the challenge we transcend, an entryway into new possibilities. In **Christian Marclay's** sound installation, the viewer hears an escalating lovers' quarrel emanating from behind a shut door, which reconciles into sounds of their love making. Paintings by **Yvonne Jacquette** and **Margaux Williamson** conflate real and imagined spaces with their unsettling perspective and soft focus, while **Charlotte Edey's** mixed media work features undulating architectures that shimmer with movement.

In the liminal space of the bedroom, artists depict private moments of loneliness, isolation and intimacy. In photographs by **Diane Arbus** and **Robert Mapplethorpe**, subjects pose for the camera with contrasting attitudes of vulnerability and defiance. **Lee Friedlander** allows us only a glimpse of his subject through the reflection in the mirror. In **Sophie Calle's** 1979 social experiment, a stranger spends a night alone in the artist's bed, unsettled by the usurpation of assumed narratives, while **Zanele Muholi's** self-portrait shows the artist in a state of solitary rest. A scene of lovers caressing by **Lisa Yuskavage** offers a window into one of the most private moments of a couple's life together.

In other works on view, truncated bodies variously express desire and the poles of toughness and fragility. Under the male gaze, **Eric Fischl**'s painting of an idealized female figure bathed in light, arms raised and hidden in shadow, renders the headless body an object of fantasy. Conversely, **Alison Elizabeth Taylor** employs the female gaze to subvert the classic erotic subject of *Corbet's L'Origine du Monde*, instead pointing to the reality of a woman's life with her scars from childbirth. Taking a different approach to the female gaze, **Sally Mann**'s murky, wet-collodian photographs of her naked husband are at once unguarded and dreamlike.

The mythological becomes a setting from which to explore fantasy and eroticism. For artists from past eras like the Old Master **Artus Wolffort**, biblical stories provided the only acceptable subject matter in which to paint the female nude. *Esther in the Women's House of Abasuerus* is a bawdy scene of uncomfortable intimacy where men bathe women, who gaze furtively out of the scene, as if pleading for deliverance. Contemporary painter **Jesse Mockrin** challenges the canon by depicting a woman who, whether in a state of self-pleasure or ravishment, is entirely self-contained. **Naudline Pierre**'s ecstatic scene of transformation represents an evolution of the self—the female form escaping from her earthly existence into the luminous unknown.

As Swiss psychologist CG Jung describes, night is the realm when we “*produce symbols unconsciously and spontaneously, in the form of dreams*” in response to our daily realities. Artists, as image makers, conjure impressions from the dreamworld to bring the unconscious into the light. **Alexandria Couch**'s dreamer falls through the ceiling onto a bed that is at once inside and outside, while nearby spirits hover upside down, engulfed in flames. **Enrique Martinez Celaya** creates a dreamscape of light and shadow, an illuminated doorway beckoning above, while the viewer feels trapped in the darkness below by a menacing battleship straddling the threshold. **Cardiff Miller**'s sound piece examines the wonderment of dreams' formation, as explained from a child's imagination. **Brandon Ndife** crafts an uncanny bedside table, which morphs into the realm of hallucination in the halflight of awakening.

Artists are like alchemists, they transform their inner lives into intuitive, mythopoetic scenes. For many, including **Jane Corrigan**, **Dana Sherwood**, and **Elizabeth Glaessner**, making is a process of inquiry. The artist begins without a clear image in mind, trusting their not-knowing to bring about images filled with mystery that speak to deeper truths beyond what words can describe.

Play takes turns with nightmares in an exploration of the human psyche. In a visual game, **Tom Burckhardt**'s *Book Page* series channels Rorschach inkblots in chance encounters with language. **Marlene Dumas** explores gendered role play in her deck of cards, while **Hugh Steer**'s touching scene of drag depicts loving tenderness between two men. Ghosts and spirits hover in a scene of displacement in **Yun-Fei Ji**'s painting and **Jenny Morgan**'s woodlands feel haunted by darker forces. Transforming trauma into art, **Tecla Tofano** creates sculptures of a bed in clay, to explore her experience of fear and violence in 20th century Venezuela. The exhibition takes a humorous turn in the surreal video by **Martin Kersels** in which the artist and a young girl navigate a teenager's gyrating pink bedroom.

Behind the Bedroom Door features works by **Diane Arbus**, **Pierre Bonnard**, **Tom Burckhardt**, **Sophie Calle**, **Janet Cardiff** and **George Bures Miller**, **Enrique Martinez Celaya**, **Jane Corrigan**, **Alexandria Couch**, **Marlene Dumas**, **Charlotte Edey**, **Eric Fischl**, **Louis Fratino**, **Lee Friedlander**, **Elizabeth Glaessner**, **Sheila Hicks**, **Yvonne Jacquette**, **Yun-Fei Ji**, **Martin Kersels**, **Mernet Larsen**, **Sally Mann**, **Robert Mapplethorpe**, **Christian Marclay**, **Jesse Mockrin**, **Jenny Morgan**, **Zanele Muholi**, **Brandon Ndife**, **Nicholas Nixon**, **Naudline Pierre**, **Dana Sherwood**, **Yinka Shonibare CBE**, **Hugh Steers**, **Alison Elizabeth Taylor**, **Tecla Tofano**, **Edouard Vuillard**, **Margaux Williamson**, **Artus Wolffort** and **Lisa Yuskavage**.

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