

Mariah Dekkenga & Ioanna Pantazopoulou: Femmage on Fire at Situations

artefuse.com/2018/01/30/mariah-dekkenga-ioanna-pantazopoulou-femme-on-fire-125349/

By David Sanderson



Installation of Mariah Dekkenga & Ioanna Pantazopoulou at SITUATIONS Gallery. Image courtesy of the artists and SITUATIONS.

There is a lot to dissect in Mariah Dekkenga and Ioanna Pantazopoulou's colorful explosion of an exhibition at SITUATIONS Gallery. Dekkenga's psychedelic, multicolored paintings meet Pantazopoulou's kaleidoscopic, chromatic sculptures in a crush of color and concept. While both artists rely heavily on ostentatious color schemes, the works are more than straightforward examples of unencumbered formalism.

Take for example, Pantazopoulou's sculpture titled L.B., made of discarded 35mm dental slides, plastic marigolds, and shiny blue tinsel, sewn to a pink hammock in multicolored yarn, and strung across the gallery. Preternatural materials are orchestrated into a seductively constructed sculpture that synchronously offers visual delight and an opportunity to become a part of the installation. Viewers are invited to lounge in the hammock while they gaze at Dekkenga's exquisitely executed oils on linen. One could easily idle for hours.



Mariah Dekkenga, *Untitled*, 2018, Oil on linen, 44 x 65 inches. Image courtesy of the artist and SITUATIONS.

Dekkenga is a painter of extraordinary skill and finesse who has the enigmatic ability to synthesize both geometric abstraction and abstract expressionism concurrently. She has developed a personalized method to arrive at her compositions via computer software. Selected digital configurations are then transferred by hand onto the canvas, fusing computerized color scales and painterly gesture into sublimely wrought pictures that feel simultaneously out of time and of the moment.

A text anthologized and yet still relevant to artists today, Miriam Schapiro and Melissa Meyer's 1978 essay, "Waste Not Want Not: An Inquiry into What Women Saved and Assembled," defines "Femmage." Take for example Pantazopoulou's fabulously eccentric sculpture, *J.S.B.T.*, consisting of rolled scraps of judo mats, spaced with plastic caps, and embellished with push pins, bolts, and bells that Greek herders place around the necks of their sheep. It meets much of the criteria laid out in the text – It is "made by a woman, the activities of saving and collecting are important ingredients, scraps are essential to the process and recycled in the work, abstract forms create a pattern." However, the work is not only "for an audience of intimates." The work is brazenly positioned in the gallery window so that people walking by the gallery can also view the work. Pantazopoulou transubstantiates nascent ideas through a contemporary lens. She invites everyone to see what she's built. Then she literally adds the whistles and bells.

Schapiro is well known for her writing, artwork, and achievements in the feminist art movement, such as co-founding one of the first feminist-art programs at CalArts in 1971, and coining the term femmage. However, she is known less for her pursuit of computer-aided

design. In the late sixties, Shapiro's Computer Series presented hard-edged paintings of non-Euclidean geometry problem sets. The works are thought-provoking and add another layer to Schapiro's oeuvre, but they also clarify the struggle between the lineages of technological art within the greater context of art history. The fledgling works are strong, but seem a side note for an artist indoctrinated in the arrant P&D movement. We've now come to a crossroads. Dekkenga's new works satiate the desire to close the gap between painting and digital art. Rectilinear shapes divide the canvas in the same way as when multiple windows and tabs on a computer screen are open. Paint on the surface looks as if it were printed by a large machine over an abstract expressionist painting. Both the context and execution are perfectly matched.



Ioanna Pantazopoulou, J.S.B.T., 2018, Judo mats, plastic caps, push pins, bolts, welded sheep bells, Variable Dimensions.
Image courtesy of the artist and SITUATIONS.

Peering through the lens of the feminist art movement, it is clear that both artists, Dekkenga and Pantazopoulou, follow along this divergent and serpentine path. In contrast to both artists' strong sense of color, feminism and the work of artists like Schapiro, appear as a muted force behind this radical exhibition.

Mariah Dekkenga was born in 1978 in Marathon, WI and lives and works between Doha, Qatar and Randolph, VT. She graduated from The University of Iowa with a MFA in 2008 and has held solo exhibitions at Eli Ping/Frances Perkins, New York and Spare Room, Brooklyn. Selected group exhibitions include Clifton Benevento, New York; Suzanne Geiss, New York; The Hole, New York; Denny Gallery, New York; and The Fire Station, Doha, Qatar. Dekkenga has participated in residencies at the Babayan Culture House in Cappadocia, Turkey; Takt Kunstraum Tapir in Berlin; and Officina Stamperia del Notaio in Tusa, Spain. Upcoming in March, Dekkenga's works will be shown at the SITUATIONS booth at NADA New York.



Detail of Ioanna Pantazopoulou, L.B., 2017, 35mm Dental slides, string, wool, plastic Indian marigolds, tinsel, Variable Dimensions. Image courtesy of the artist and SITUATIONS.

Ioanna Pantazopoulou was born in 1985 in Athens, Greece. She lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. Graduating from the Chelsea College of Art and Design, London with a BFA and MFA, she has held solo and two-person exhibitions at Safe Gallery (Brooklyn, NY), Ileana Tounta Contemporary Arts Center (Athens, Greece), and Primetime Gallery (Brooklyn, NY). Her work has been included in several group exhibitions at The Athens Conservatoire (Athens, Greece, presented by NEON), Hydra School Projects (Athens, Greece), Grand Union Gallery

(Birmingham, U.K), and with JAG Projects (Hudson, NY and Miami, FL). Ioanna has an upcoming solo exhibition at Ileana Tounta Contemporary in Athens, Greece opening March 22nd.

Miriam Schapiro was born in Toronto, Canada in 1923 and died in Hampton Bays, New York in 2015. She received a Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, and Master of Fine Arts from the State University of Iowa in Iowa City and was the co-founder with Judy Chicago of the Feminist Art Program at California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, California in 1971. In addition to numerous one-person exhibitions of her work, traveling retrospective exhibitions have been organized by the Vassar College Gallery, Poughkeepsie, NY (1980); Heckscher Museum of Art, Huntington, NY (2000); Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, Miami, FL (2001); and the University of Iowa Museum of Art, Iowa City, IA (2002). Schapiro has been included in thematic exhibitions around the world and co-organized the groundbreaking exhibition Womanhouse in 1972. In March 2018, the Museum of Arts and Design in New York will present Surface/Depth: The Decorative after Miriam Schapiro, a critical assessment of Schapiro's legacy in contemporary art. Schapiro is the recipient of awards such as the Visual Artist Fellowship from the National Endowment of the Arts, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, and honorary doctorates from College of Wooster, Wooster, OH; California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, CA; Lawrence University, Appleton, WI; Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Minneapolis, MN; Miami University, Oxford, OH; and Moore College of Art, Philadelphia, PA. In 2006, the Miriam Schapiro Archives for Women Artists was established at Rutgers University. Schapiro's work is in public collections including the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; The Jewish Museum, New York, NY; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, CA; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY.

Miriam Schapiro's Computer Series is currently on view at Honor Fraser Gallery through February 16. Honor Fraser is at 2622 S. La Cienega Blvd. in Los Angeles CA and open Tuesday – Saturday 10 – 6pm.

Mariah Dekkenga & Ioanna Pantazopoulou runs through February 25th. SITUATIONS Gallery is located in the Chinatown neighborhood of Manhattan at 127 Henry Street between Rutgers and Pike Streets. Hours of operation are Thursday – Sunday 12-6pm and by appointment.

Writing by David Liam Sanderson. Images courtesy of the artists and SITUATIONS Gallery.



Installation of Mariah Dekkenga & Ioanna Pantazopoulou at SITUATIONS Gallery. Image courtesy of the artists and SITUATIONS.



Mariah Dekkenga, Untitled, 2018, Oil on linen, 42 x 33 inches
Image courtesy of the artist and SITUATIONS.



Installation of Mariah Dekkenga & Ioanna Pantazopoulou at SITUATIONS Gallery. Image courtesy of the artists and SITUATIONS.

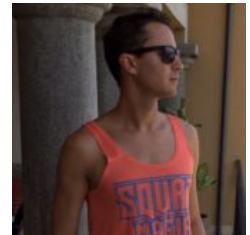


Detail of Ioanna Pantazopoulou, *J.S.B.T.*, 2018, Judo mats, plastic caps, push pins, bolts, welded sheep bells, *Variable Dimensions*. Image courtesy of the artist and SITUATIONS.



Installation of Mariah Dekkenga & Ioanna Pantazopoulou at SITUATIONS Gallery. Image courtesy of the artists and SITUATIONS.

Tags: [Ioanna Pantazopoulou](#), [Mariah Dekkenga](#), [Mariah Dekkenga & Ioanna Pantazopoulou: Femmage on Fire at Situations](#), [SITUATIONS](#)



David Sanderson

David Sanderson lives and works in New York City. He writes art criticism, skateboards, surfs, and plays in Nastie Band.