POWERS / LOWENFELS GALLERY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MARY REGENSBURG FEIST: MODERNIST MINERVA

New York, NY — Powers | Lowenfels is excited to announce, Mary Regensburg Feist: Modernist Minerva, an exhibit of the early works of Modernist painter Mary Regensburg Feist (1914-2014). November 18 - January 30. 6-8pm. Opening night reception November 18, 6-8 pm.

Instead of attending the Yale School of Art, Mary Regensburg Feist studied with John Sloan from 1932 to 1936. In the summer of '36, Sloan invited her to paint in Santa Fe, and at 22, she exhibited that summer's work at the Fine Arts Museum in Santa Fe. She had been showing with the venerable Montross Gallery and the Society of Independent Artists since age 20.

Many of Regensburg Feist's paintings capture the energy of their making, wet-on-wet, in one go. The 1936 portrait of the avant-garde composer Edgard Varèse is honest and electric, with raking waves of black hair, his intense face scored in red hatching, and a ground of astringent zinc yellow. The Santa Fe New Mexican newspaper noted, "The electric quality of Varèse… [with] an emphasis on line that makes [him] startling."

In 1937, she held a one-person show at Montross Gallery, which the New York Times critic Howard Devree gave a mixed review as he struggled with her bold originality and "breathless vigor and drive." He singled out Damned Arroyo for being one of her best works.

Dammed Arroyo (1936) is built on a stepped concrete dam that drives diagonally down the canvas. It is a companion piece to John Sloan's painting now at the Delaware Art Museum. Though she studied with Sloan, she took more from the Fauvists and from the blockbuster Van Gogh exhibit at The MOMA in 1935. The painting's energy comes from dense impasto and dashed alizarin crimson lines that define the stepped dam, turquoise riverbed, burnt-orange earth, and piñon-green hillside.

Several of her 1937 portraits anticipate Alice Neel's line and Pop Art's graphic bluntness, using large, flat portraits in monochromatic flesh tones with no attempt at shadow. In the portrait of Jane Marx, she draws the body and bones in mars violet, while a deep red outline frames the white dress. Sgraffito in her black hair defines its flow and volume. The flat blue-green wall repeats with gold medallions.

Though this exhibit focuses on her early work, Mary lived a long life (99 years) and painted nearly 300 works in her last 15 years, including a few nude self-portraits, such as the one we included: an endearing self-portrait at the age of 85, standing inside the bathroom door in a shower cap.

Mary Regensburg Feist's paintings are in numerous private collections and in the permanent collection of the New Mexico Museum of Fine Arts in Santa Fe and the Westmoreland Museum of American Art in Greensburg, PA.

A note about the title: the term "Modern Minerva" was coined in the 18th century in response to Élisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun's paintings, and later became a term for an independent, cultured woman artist. But, then again, as Patti Smith puts it, "Nobody says Picasso the male artist!"

The gallery is open Thursday-Sunday 12:00-6:00 pm. To keep up to date on gallery features follow Steven S. Powers (@stevenspowers) and Joshua Lowenfels (@ployaarrtt) on Instagram. The website address is PowersLowenfels.com

https://www.powerslowenfels.com/portfolio-collections/my-portfolio/regensburg-feist

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Mary Regensburg Feist (1914-2014)
Jane Marx
Oil on Canvas
Dated: 1937
Size: 36" x 30"

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Mary Regensburg Feist (1914-2014)
Edgard Varèse
Oil on Canvas
Dated: 1936
Size: 24" x 20"

Exhibited: Fine Arts Museum, Santa Fe, 1936; Montross Gallery, 1937; Westmoreland Museum, 1996

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Mary Regensburg Feist (1914-2014)
Unidentified Portrait
Oil on Canvas
Dated: 1937
Size: 30" x 24"

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Mary Regensburg Feist (1914-2014)
Dammed Arroyo
Oil on Canvas
Dated: 1936
Size: 20" x 24"

Exhibited: Fine Arts Museum, Santa Fe, 1936; Montross Gallery, 1937
Mentioned in the New York Times, March 14, 1937

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Mary Regensburg Feist (1914-2014)
Nude Self-Portrait (Shower Cap)
Oil on Canvas
Circa: 1999
Size: 36" x 24"