

# FRÆNKEL

49 GEARY STREET SAN FRANCISCO 94108 415 981 2661

For immediate release:



## **Martine Gutierrez**

*ANTI-ICON:*

*APOKALYPSIS*

May 24 – July 15, 2023

Fraenkel Gallery is pleased to present *ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS*, a daring new body of work by artist Martine Gutierrez. The series continues her exploration of identity across the cultural landscapes of gender, race, and celebrity. In 17 new works, Gutierrez has transformed herself into a multitude of idols—a selection from the series comprises Gutierrez's second exhibition with the gallery. Costumed by the barest of essentials, Gutierrez's figure is the catalyst, reflecting dystopian futurism upon the symbols of our past. Through each metamorphosis, Gutierrez re-envisions a diverse canon of radical heroines who have achieved legendary cultural influence over thousands of years in both art history and pop culture.

*Still a patriarchal language, a determinative frame. Still a divisional boundary of womanhood, a categorization of the icon, a spiritual reality in mass production. The same face of currency made over and over again. What is an icon, a cult image? Rather, what is an image? What brings a symbol to power? Culture is history's political influence, a pendulum of domination. What is power without*

# FRÆNKEL

49 GEARY STREET SAN FRANCISCO 94108 415 981 2661

*resistance? The historical moment, and the figure that stands in opposition. Icon as fact, a perceived understanding of truth in the world, teaching us how to see. Image as instruction; see, when an aspiration finds meaning it exceeds its boundaries, it becomes momentous. Larger than life or death, but rather the cycle between lives. Not a vision, but the place we are at now, the inevitable new, the next civilization we are going to become. In refusal of deception, an encounter with unobfuscated femininity is revealed. If the icon shows humanity's spiritual ideal, it is the anti-icon who refuses the delusion of man, his inflated self-conception. For the icon makes real the image, anti-icon must break through to reveal reality. What is a revelation? A proclamation of clarity, a veneer stripped away, a shattering. It feels like the world is ending, because it did; it has before, and it will again end. What is the world? In the progress of nihilism, creation becomes resistance; a new image of what the world was all along.*

– Martine Gutierrez

The project's cult following began in 2021 when first commissioned by Public Art Fund. Ten images from the original series were chosen to circulate on bus shelters normally used for advertising. Pedestrians encountered the larger-than-life figures on their daily commutes in 300 locations across New York, Chicago, and Boston. Gutierrez adapted these images by veiling the publicly hung nude self-portraits, both delegating her autonomy and struggle in the ongoing political restrictions placed on women's bodies in the United States.

This summer, Gutierrez will reveal *ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS* in three distinct selections set to preview across three venues: Fraenkel Gallery, San Francisco; RYAN LEE Gallery, New York; and Josh Lilley, London. The three-gallery exhibition will be accompanied by a new artist book, published by RYAN LEE, entitled *APOKALYPSIS*. The full collection of 17 portraits will be presented in its entirety for the first time in a traveling museum show, organized by Polygon Gallery, Vancouver slated for 2024.

Gutierrez is the sole performer in the series, portraying all 17 groundbreaking figures: Aphrodite, ancient Greek goddess of love, desire and beauty, identified by the Romans as 'Venus'; Ardhanarishvara, composite male-female figure of the Hindu god Shiva together with his consort Parvati; Atargatis, Syrian mother goddess of fertility and the moon; Cleopatra, Egyptian ruler famed for her influence on Roman politics; Queen Elizabeth I, England's second female monarch when the country asserted itself as a major power in politics, commerce, and the arts in the 16th century; Gabriel, angel in the Abrahamic religions believed by many to be able to take on any physical form; Helen of Troy, Greek beauty seen as the cause of the Trojan war; Joan of Arc, sainted heroine of France, revered as a holy person for her faithfulness and bravery in battle, burned at the stake by the church; Judith The Slayer, courageous biblical widow who used her charm to save her people from an Assyrian general; Lady Godiva, bold noblewoman from the Medieval period who fought for justice for everyday people; Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mesoamerican Catholic title of Mary, who appeared to the Indigenous man Juan Diego and imprinted herself on his cloak as proof of her visitation; Mary Magdalene, 'Magdalene' means tower, as she is an early tower of the Christian faith, cited in the four canonical gospels as a follower and companion of Jesus Christ, a witness to his crucifixion and resurrection; The Virgin Mary, a young Jewish virgin from Nazareth, chosen by God to conceive Jesus through the Holy Spirit; La Madonna, Italian for 'Lady, Virgin Mary', central figure of Christianity, celebrated as the 'Virgin Queen' in processions of Semana Santa, throughout Spain and Latin America; Hua Mulan, famed warrior of Chinese folklore who disguised herself as a man to fight in battle; Sacagawea, Shoshone interpreter and guide of the expedition to discover routes through pre-colonial

# FRAENKEL

49 GEARY STREET SAN FRANCISCO 94108 415 981 2661

America, journaled by Lewis and Clark; Queen of Sheba, Ethiopian queen, known for her wit, power, and wealth, her romance with King Solomon is documented in the Kebra Nagast.

Martine Gutierrez (b. 1989, Berkeley, California; lives and works in New York) is a transdisciplinary artist whose practice includes photography, performance, music, and film. Her work has been featured in solo museum exhibitions at the Australian Centre for Photography, Darlinghurst, Australia; Blaffer Art Museum, University of Houston, Houston; Contemporary Art Museum, Raleigh, North Carolina; Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis; Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Fort Worth, Texas; Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago; Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma; and the Rockwell Museum, Corning, New York, among others. Her work is included in the collections of the Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University, Stanford, California; Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York; Milwaukee Art Museum; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego; Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, among others.

\* \* \*

Image: Martine Gutierrez, *Aphrodite from ANTI-ICON: APOKALYPSIS*, 2021

For press inquiries and images, please contact Rebecca Robertson  
at 415.981.2661 or [rrobertson@fraenkelgallery.com](mailto:rrobertson@fraenkelgallery.com)