

# FRAENKEL

49 GEARY STREET SAN FRANCISCO 94108 415 981 2661

For immediate release:



# FRAENKENSTEIN

**CREATED BY** JEFFREY FRAENKEL & JORDAN STEIN

**May 30 - August 10, 2024**

Fraenkel Gallery is pleased to present *Fraenkenstein*, an exhibition tracing the persistent resonance of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* through work by more than 20 artists. The project is a collaboration between Fraenkel Gallery founder Jeffrey Fraenkel and curator and writer Jordan Stein, of the San Francisco exhibition space Cushion Works. Bringing together an eclectic selection of photographs, collage, sculpture, painting, and film, the exhibition will take an expansive and incomplete look at fear, the unknown, the threat of technology, and

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the ways in which the Frankenstein story and its characters have moved through popular culture. A public reception for the exhibition will take place on Saturday, June 1, from 2-4pm.

The monster we've come to know as Frankenstein was a vegetarian. He is also nameless, though his creator, Dr. Victor Frankenstein, refers to him as "being," "fiend," and "daemon." Over the course of two centuries—the book was first published anonymously in 1818—and in the public imagination, the patient has taken the doctor's name, and the word "Frankenstein" has been fashioned into a noun, verb, and adjective to signal a uniquely grotesque form of cobbled-togetherness.

The book—its story, subjects, and all around "It's Alive!" flavor (a line taken from the 1931 Boris Karloff film, not the book)—is often read as a parable about the dangers of unchecked ambition, invention, and so-called progress, and its warning has been applied to the atomic age, climate change, the any-day-now takeover of artificial intelligence, and much more. It's also a story about fear—a fear of the unknown, and a fear of the real and perceived monsters among and within us. In 2024, the book and its themes remain freakishly relevant, legible through countless lenses and applicable to enumerable blood curdling prospects—a former president and artificial intelligence not the least among them.

A proper exhibition tackling the book and the ways in which "Frankenstein" moves through popular culture would require a museum with the staff and resources of the Louvre. This project should therefore be considered entirely improper and radically incomplete, populated by artworks that speak in varied ways to the book's varied concerns. The initial concept for *Fraenkenstein* was proposed by Stein to Fraenkel in the spring of 2023. Fraenkel said yes on the spot, and *Fraenkenstein* is the malfunctioning birthchild of their curiously overlapping sensibilities.

The exhibition features works by Diane Arbus, Hans Bellmer, Brian Belott, Janet Cardiff & George Bures Miller, Bruce Conner, Kota Ezawa, Nan Goldin, Brett Goodroad, Katy Grannan, Martine Gutierrez, Whitney Hubbs, Peter Hujar, George Kuchar, Christian Marclay, Wardell Milan, Richard Misrach, B. Ingrid Olson, Woody De Othello, Hiroshi Sugimoto, John Waters, Lindsey White, and others.

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Image: Diane Arbus, "*Frankenstein's Daughter*" [close up with shoulders] 1958

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