

THOMAS BRAMBILLA

Benglis and the Baroque

10/12/2016 - 25/02/2017

Opening: Saturday, 10th December 2016, 6.30 p.m.

Opening hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 2.00 -7.00 p.m.

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Thomas Brambilla Gallery is pleased to present *Benglis and the Baroque*, Lynda Benglis' first solo exhibition in Italy. The show opens on Saturday, December 10th, 2016, at 6:30 p.m.

The exhibition includes a series of large scale marble *Torsos* specially made for this show. *Benglis and the Baroque* explores Benglis' long-held interest in Baroque sculpture. Much like Gianlorenzo Bernini, Benglis seeks to freeze the intensity of the moment and merge beauty and sensuality in spectacular frozen gestures. Benglis' attention to materials and ongoing research into the "extravagant" are in full agreement with Baroque poetics.

Departing from the non-traditional art materials which dominate contemporary art, Benglis' new marble sculptures signal an engagement with art history and a continuation of her ongoing embrace of the natural qualities of her various media. These are among her first sculptures in marble and Benglis exploits the material for all of its voluptuous qualities. For instance, the surface of the white *Torso* calls to mind the fitful undulations of Bernini's sculptures all the while retaining the marble's inherent glow. This effect is amplified in other works in the series by Benglis' use of different colored marbles. On one level, colored marble harkens back to the many ancient and Baroque architects and artists who were drawn to its inherently decorative color and pattern. Benglis goes one step further and puts the naturally rich colors of her marble forms in dialogue with the veins which trace the forms' peaks and hollows, much like the cascading lines of ink and paint which appear in Benglis' paper sculptures. This sensuous interplay of form, color and line is likely to encourage in the viewer a "*movimento d'animo*" (Movement of Soul).

In her recent paper sculptures, Benglis returns to torso and totem forms, recurring shapes in her decades-long career. In these works, the play of surface against structure is key. Benglis lays handmade paper over a skeletal armature of chicken wire which is sometimes concealed, sometimes revealed. The excitement that comes from this peep-show of support and surface is heightened by sparkles, another of Benglis' signature materials. At the most basic level, these sparkles contort the forms they cover by means of their reflection and absorption of light. For the viewer, they also add a sense of movement and theatricality very much in keeping with the spirit of Bernini's fountains. The flicker of Benglis' sparkles imparts the works with an ceaseless changeability.

Lynda Benglis (1941) lives and works in New York, Santa Fe and Ahmedabad, India. Benglis's work is in many public collections including: Guggenheim Museum; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Modern Art, New York; The National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Most recently Benglis was the subject of an international retrospective which traveled to: The Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; The Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; Le Consortium, Dijon; Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design; and the New Museum, New York.