MIRIAM BEERMAN

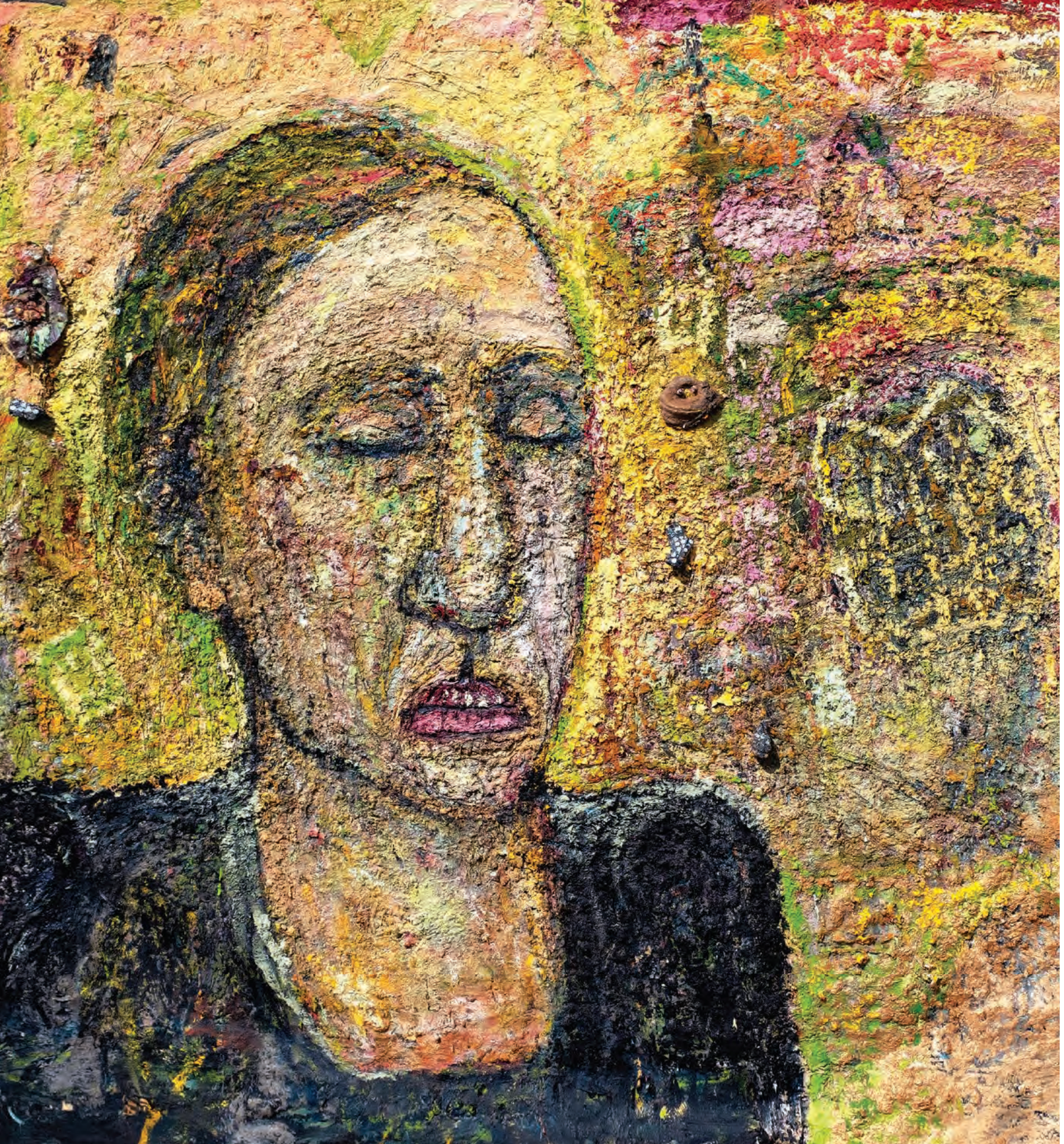
1923 - 2022

NOTHING HAS CHANGED

THE SHOW'S TITLE PIECE, MIRIAM BEERMAN'S 1999 CANVAS *NOTHING HAS CHANGED,* (SHOWN RIGHT) IS DESCRIBED BY GALLERIST JAMES YAROSH AS

"A LATER WORK, A PORTRAIT OF A MONUMENTAL FEMALE FACE, WHOSE EYES ARE CLOSED IN RESIGNATION OF HER ROLE. SHE DISAPPEARS BEHIND THE FACADE OF JOYOUS YELLOWS AND PINK, AND YET HER HOPES ARE PAINTED ON THE RIGHT—AN ABSTRACT DREAM VISION OF HER IMAGINED JOY, TO RUN AWAY, TO COLOR OUTSIDE THE LINES AND CREATE HER OWN IDEAS OF 'HAPPY EVER AFTER.'

THE ARCHETYPAL PORTRAIT IS BEERMAN'S *MONA LISA*, EXCEPT HERE, THE SMILE IS UPSIDE-DOWN."



MIRIAM BEERMAN, *Nothing has Changed*, 1999, 69in x 67in, oil on canvas

MIRIAM BEERMAN: 1923–2022 NOTHING HAS CHANGED OPENS FALL SEASON AT MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY

Exhibition shines a spotlight on the late Miriam Beerman, a New Jersey artist whose works are included in the permanent collections of over 60 museums worldwide and a female pioneer in the 20th-century art world.

WEST LONG BRANCH, NJ—The Monmouth University Center for the Arts announces the launch of its fall 2022 season with *Miriam Beerman: 1923–2022 NOTHING HAS CHANGED*.

The exhibition showcases Beerman as one of the 20th-century's most provocative artists, whose humanist expressionist works highlight her talent as a colorist. As a pioneer and one of the first female artists to be given a solo exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Beerman is part of a canon of 20th-century women artists who were nearly lost to obscurity due to their gender in a male-dominated art world.

The show runs from September 6 to December 11 in the Rechnitz Hall DiMattio Gallery of the Monmouth University Center for the Arts. The opening reception is September 22 from 6 to 9 p.m.

Influenced by the social injustice seen around her, Beerman shines a spotlight on the horror and pathos of man's inhumanity to man. The themes prove to be timeless, resonating today as much as when they were created in the 20th century. Her life and art were explored in the 2015 documentary *Miriam Beerman: Expressing the Chaos*.

Nearly 20 large-scale canvases by Beerman will be represented. The show is guest curated by gallerist James Yarosh and draws upon the recent exhibition *Miriam Beerman – REDISCOVER*, shown at James Yarosh & Associates Gallery in Holmdel, N.J., which opened in spring 2022. The exhibition, *Miriam Beerman, 1923-2022 NOTHING HAS CHANGED* marks the second guest curator role at the university for Yarosh who curated *Sheba Sharrow: BALANCING ACT* in 2017. A companion show of Beerman's works on paper and collages is simultaneously on view at James Yarosh & Associates Gallery.

"Living with Miriam Beerman's paintings at the gallery with the current exhibit *Miriam Beerman - REDISCOVER*, one cannot help but be both moved and stirred to be in the presence of the colossal works, heavy with paint, laden with subject. When you see these humanist expressionist works existing silently, holding the weight of the world, you begin to understand the gallery's presentation," says Yarosh, a gallerist fueled by curatorial activism in recent years. "As I described Miriam's art to clients, it occurred to me that those words also described the role of female artists of the 20th century whose voices were more stifled in favor of male artists—and of women's roles in a patriarchal society.

"If our art history is male-dominant, and the artists before us, our teachers, we are only getting half the lessons to be learned," he continues. "We have an opportunity to do better. This presentation with Monmouth University allows the conversations to continue and include a younger generation."

"*NOTHING HAS CHANGED* picks up the dialogue from the 2017 Sheba Sharrow: Balancing Act exhibition. Although their art is different, the mission is similar: A female artist who rails against social injustices in her art as a call to action to evoke change," says Scott Knauer, Director of Galleries and Collections, Department of Art & Design, Monmouth University. "Much of the subject matter that Miriam Beerman delved into is still so relevant and threatened today: political, social, religious rights, women's rights, and threats against minorities."

SCOTT KNAUER Director of Galleries and Collections Monmouth University
JAMES YAROSH Guest Curator, Gallerist, James Yarosh Associates Fine Art Gallery

MIRIAM BEERMAN, *Shower II*, 1999, 68in x 60in, oil on canvas/ Mixed Media

MIRIAM BEERMAN: HUMANIST

Humanism, the conviction that the human condition is our philosophical center, seems self-evident. Yet art history shows us that it is not. The avant-garde, art history's vanguard, is wary of humanism, considering it a passive intellectual trope. Yet suspicion engenders distance and distance evokes interest.

Miriam Beerman is a humanist among the avant-garde, an outsider who spent her long productive life working privately and relentlessly on the inside. Although she began her career as an abstract expressionist steeped in the emotional guidance of painting's act, it was the figure, both humane and bestial, that eventually emerged. Beerman was not alone.

In 1959 the Museum of Modern Art presented New Images of Man, an exhibition of recent imagist art from Europe and the United States assembled by the expatriate German art historian Peter Selz. Coming at a time when Abstract Expressionism was ascendant and figurative work widely viewed as retrograde, the show seemed a twisted paragon of high-minded humanism for a traumatized cold war world. Reviews were almost uniformly negative. Writing in *The New Yorker*, Robert Coates found the show "so capricious and so far from representing any broad, true impression of the atmosphere of today that it is hardly worthwhile going into any critical appraisal of it." Manny Farber said in *Art News* that "[r]ather than being the long awaited' answer to Abstract-Expressionism, the Museum's monster show is confusion with wishful thinking buried under its sentimental hide." Notable in his lonely praise was *The New York Times*' John Canaday who stated earnestly and outright: "this is an important exhibition... it demonstrates that the cultivation of expressive imagery by artists who have seemed isolated from one another has been a pervasive constant in contemporary painting and sculpture."

The figurative expressionism which characterized New Images of Man is indeed a persistent leitmotif, not only in the art being made after World War II, but also recurring since with regularity - and varying degrees of empathy and enmity - despite wanton shifts in focus and rationale. One of the more interesting minor movements of the 1970's was the "New Humanism" defined by the social psychologist Barry Schwartz. Beerman was included in Schwartz's appropriately named exhibition Counter Currents: the New Humanism that coincided with the publication of his book *The New Humanism - Art In A Time of Change* in 1974. The exhibition was based in part on the Rhino Horn group of figurative expressionists, artists with whom Beermen sometimes showed, but to which she never belonged. Beerman's longevity mirrors this independence. Today, several cycles into figurative expressionism's eternal return, Beerman's work is again prescient.

Sections of this essay are reproduced from a brochure for *No Images of Man*, an exhibition curated for Gering Lopez Gallery in New York in 2008. The show included a work by Miriam Beerman.

MITCHELL ALGUS
Gallerist, Mitchell Algus Gallery

MIRIAM BEERMAN: A MASTER AMONG US

The depth and breadth of Miriam Beerman's talent, work ethic, and intellect alone was exceptional. Yet there was a core to her that was incredibly unique. As a child she battled illness, as a young adult she pushed past her conservative upbringing to study in Paris; forging her own path in pursuit of artistic excellence. Widowed with a young child, she raised her son while teaching and creating her work. She was tough, curious, compassionate, prolific, and infinitely capable. A master portrayer of human expression, pain, terror, and grief are deftly relieved by moments of absurdist comedy. While she was undeniably drawn to portray the horrors of humanity, automatic drawing and the unconscious played an important role in her work as well. Whether her implementation was via pigment, pen, or collage, there was a directness and immediacy to her craft born of great labor and intensity. Layer after layer would be applied surely and decisively. As the accretions built the canvas was imbued with dimensionality and ablaze with color. The sheer size and physicality of her work surrounds the viewer, filling their peripheral vision and commanding nothing less than complete attention.

Her home was an extension of her artwork. Her painting studio was on the top floor with a huge wooden easel holding center court under the soft filtered glow from the skylights above. Art was everywhere; filling canvas racks built into the walls, overflowing from flat files and covering every surface. The kitchen walls had images and articles of interest pinned to them, including one of Louis Bourgeois' most recent retrospective. Miriam was encouraged to see a fellow respected female artist gain proper recognition in her elder years. Books, stacks of New Yorkers, and art publications were abundant throughout her home. Lavish decor and luxuries were not. This is not to say that she did not appreciate beautiful things, she did, but they were not her priority. Sitting on a couch you would likely find a book of poetry occupying the cushion beside you with a scrap of paper and pen ready to capture a verse. These pieces of poetry would often find their way to her collage studio on the second floor alongside a multitude of drawings, catalog images she had drawn into, photos, fabrics, bones, reflective tapes...anything that caught her attention. No material was off limits. She was prepared and purposeful. To watch her compose a collage was a symphony of visual expression.

As an American woman coming of age in a dynamic political landscape, Miriam was a part of the change, but also transcended it. The art she created acts as conduits; pulling us from apathy, compelling us to look, to think, to feel, to glimpse the chaos she fought to give voice to. These works bear witness to humanity's barberism in events of the past and continue to hold a light to our current circumstances. *Nothing Has Changed, Flame, and Couple, Rider of an Unruly Horse* instantly come to mind when thinking of reversal of abortion rights, LGBTQ+ inclusivity and social justice.

Miriam was a role model for younger female artists; a mentor to many, including myself. She was generous with her knowledge, unafraid to share her process, and thrilled by students who took a leap and grew. A critique by her was a master class in the process; thorough, insightful, and direct. The hours we spent talking over tea at her kitchen table imparted wisdom borne of a lifetime of struggle, intensity of purpose, and boundless capacity for compassion. She believed in her purpose, was proud of the bravery she had exhibited in her past, and was certain of the importance of the work in her future. This absolute belief in the validity of her voice combined with her immense talent to create powerful, relevant works of art.

This voice is one that is insistent and necessary. Artists have been on the forefront of revolution throughout history. Those like Miriam whose work fearlessly confront humanity's callousness can be catalysts for real change. Miriam did the work that she was compelled to create; regardless of personal circumstances or artworld validation she persisted. She has left us with a legacy that must be experienced and fully absorbed. Her work is a path past our own complacency; a way forward through understanding that nothing has changed, and nothing will until we face the barbarism in our time.

HEATHER L. BARONE
Artist and a mentee and longtime assistant to Miriam Beerman

MIRIAM BEERMAN, *Untitled*, 75in x 76in, 1990s, acrylic on paper

MIRIAM BEERMAN, *The Plagues (Darkness)*, 1990s, 71in x 119in , oil on canvas

MIRIAM BEERMAN: A LIGHT IN THE DARK

When many of us think of art, we often tend to think of pretty pictures: beautiful sunsets, charming cottages—scenes that tempt us to close our eyes and imagine ourselves there. But art also reflects reality, and Miriam Beerman has said that she is “not interested in pretty pictures” (Expressing the Chaos). John Keats said that Beauty is Truth, and Beerman’s art is a pursuit of truth both in subject matter and style. She grapples with some of the most horrific events in human history, such as the Holocaust; and she depicts these events with the full force of chaos and horror that we would have witnessed had we actually been there. These are not lovely scenes; they are moments of reckoning.

Beerman’s paintings are challenging to understand. In Frogs, from the Biblical Plagues series, for example, we are not sure where to begin, as the entire monumental canvas is jam-packed with animal and also human figures facing and moving every which way. There is no focal point; no one-point linear perspective or other of the artistic cues provided in traditional, mainstream art, which would help us to make sense of the painting. Instead, figures and ground exist on the same plane, with strokes of color and line overlapping them and making it hard to distinguish one from another. Beerman’s style helps to articulate a chaos that more mainstream art might suppress or ignore, a chaos on which she is trying to shed light. Moreover, the overlapping lines and colors forge links between figure and ground, speaking to the interconnectedness of beings and their world.

That world is simultaneously an inner and an outer one. Beerman has said that the chaos that she is expressing is ‘inside of everyone’ (Expressing the Chaos). The figure with downturned smile in the painting, *Nothing Has Changed*, for example, could be any one of us. Beerman has likewise said that she is ‘protesting history’ (Expressing the Chaos). The Plagues are a visual metaphor for the horrors and brutality of so much of human history, which keeps repeating, but which is also, largely, the result of human choice. How, then, can we draw discrete boundaries between the world and ourselves, when so much of that world is of our own making? How can we expect change in our world if we don’t look within ourselves?

Beerman’s work attains depth in its layers of paint and layers of meaning. She has said that “you have to do a little thinking and a little work yourself. You can’t expect everybody to feed you all the information at once” (Expressing the Chaos). This holds true for the viewer as much as the artist. In our fast-paced digital age, when we can scan the Internet for any amount of information, or stream from among hundreds of entertainment and news channels, so much is accessible with just a passing glance. But a passing glance does not allow for deep reflection, and sound bites do not add up to enlightenment. The complexity of Beerman’s work compels us to stay longer, to dig deeper.

For all of its complexity of style, Beerman’s work is also immediately accessible, as she appeals directly to our emotions, and to the humanity within us all, to compel us to empathize with the figures in her paintings. In Plague of Darkness, figures are incompletely rendered, with faces that lack detail and bodies that seem nonexistent, amidst a background too dark to fully grasp. Yet who cannot recognize the anguish in those faces, wailing against the darkness? And not just human faces, but animal as well: innocent victims, all, of humankind’s own choices.

Yet Beerman’s message is ultimately one of hope. In Go On, we see on the ground, clothed in dark colors and facing downward, a lone and isolated figure set against an overwhelming environment. He could be any of us. We sense the struggle in his face, the tension in his arms that literally seem to hold the weight of this hostile world on their shoulders, as he crawls, almost clawing his way forward. And yet he goes on.

In her work, and by example of her own perseverance over decades of creative output, Beerman is challenging us to not give up in the struggle against the chaos and darkness, for these are only half the narrative. Humans have the capacity to create as well as destroy, love as well as hate, heal as well as hurt.

Beerman has said that, in ‘response to the brutality of our time…she seeks the beauty and the vigor of the paint’ (Artist’s Statement, miriambeerman.com). In Flame, brilliant yellows and oranges, like gold ground in a Byzantine mosaic, envelop the figures in an otherworldly light. In Shower II, a rainbow of colors competes against the darkness of the subject matter, refusing to allow that darkness to dominate. Beerman’s mastery of paint and color combines with her dogged pursuit of truth to create a beauty that transcends the horrors

MIRIAM BEERMAN, *The Plagues (Rivers of Blood)*, 1986, 98.75in x 64in, oil on canvas

of the very scenes she is depicting. This transformative power of her art need not be limited to the canvas, if Beerman can get us to learn from the past, and be moved to change.

In Nothing Has Changed, half the painting is filled by that monumental female face with downturned smile, who could be any of us, but who could more specifically be Beerman herself: a female artist shining a light on the dark, giving voice to those who have been silenced or ignored. The eyes of this face are closed--significant, given that Beerman's whole life's work seems to have been asking us to look at, and acknowledge, the ugly truths about ourselves and our world. Yet the face is only half the painting, half the narrative. For on the other side of the painting is an alternate world that she can imagine as she looks inward. It is a world of color and light, of beauty and possibility. A world that Beerman's art seems to have been struggling toward, and beckoning for us to follow. If life could imitate art, if we too had the courage to engage in the struggle, then change might one day yet come.

THERESA GRUPICO, PhD
Adjunct Professor, Department of Art and Design

MIRIAM BEERMAN'S PAINTING OF THE ABSURD

One must imagine Sisyphus happy.
- Albert Camus

In her artist statement, Miriam Beerman (1923-2022) described the relationship of process and meaning in her artistic practice thus:

> The physicality of the medium helps create ideas. Forms emerge out of the thickness of the paint. The painting has its own life, describing a meaning that isn't specifically planned. Automatic gestures lead to the emotional intensity of the idea and, strange as it may seem, there are suggestions of comic relief. As in the Theatre of the Absurd, the tragic and the comic go hand in hand.[1]

Beyond the link between comedy and tragedy, Beerman's brief reference to the "Theatre of the Absurd" (1940-1960) warrants further examination to understand Beerman's creative process, her paintings as finished artworks, as well as the decision to exhibit her piece's within today's state of affairs. Why did she select her particular—yet ambiguous—subject matter and paint the grotesque with expressionistic vigor as a colorist? Why should we continue to view her showcases of humanity's numerous brutalities? And, if people keep perpetuating inhumane acts across history, then how does one avoid merely sinking into a nihilistic despondency?

In Eugène Ionesco's (1909-1994) absurdist play *Rhinoceros* (1959), almost everyone in a small French village turns into a rhinoceros. With an inability to be critical any longer, the seduced villagers tragically and comedically succumb to "rhinoceritis," all except for one character. In the last line of the play, he shouts his resistance, "I'm not capitulating!" Because everyone else has transformed into rhinoceros, he finds himself unable to converse. The animals will not understand his shouts. Though somewhat doomed for not conforming, by fighting indifference, he commits to humanity.

Many, including the playwright, have commented on how Ionesco wrote *Rhinoceros* based on witnessing the mentality of those who submitted to growing Nazism in the earlier 20th century.[2] More broadly, the play enacts the larger absurdity of a universe that could facilitate such metamorphoses of human to animal. As part of the tragicomedy of "Theatre of the Absurd," the play—and many by Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, and other playwrights—unhinges theatrical realism. Absurdist plays use irrational and repetitive clichés and dialog that results in a failure of language, build tedium with little plot, fix characters into situations they cannot leave, and set stories in undefined spaces and times. Overall, these plays allow viewers to experience, rather than merely interpret narratives about, the human condition.[3]

We can understand Beerman's probing of ongoing inhumanity along similar lines. Frequently the visual language she used fails to provide a coherent meaning from her timeless subjects. She wanted her audience to have to work toward meaning when viewing her artworks. For example, has the figure in *Go On* (1990) collapsed at the pinnacle of their climb? Or do they look over a cliff's edge into an abyss at the

MIRIAM BEERMAN, *Untitled*, 1985, 59in x 72in, oil on canvas

MIRIAM BEERMAN, *LODZ (Bread) Ghetto Documents*, 1990s, 65in x 65in, oil on canvas

start of their quest? Whose arm does the protagonist of *Flame* (1999) reach out to grasp? Whose head lies at their feet? Who appears at the edges of the painting's saturated red and orange scrim? Is *Shower II* (1999) suggestive of the Holocaust Beerman referenced explicitly elsewhere, as guards told prisoners to disrobe and bathe before entering camp, but instead led them to their deaths in gas chambers? Or is this shower more innocent? The title and painting allow for both interpretations and for onlookers to perceive both the cruel and the mundane.

In other instances, Beerman expressively suggested more specific subjects, as in her *Rivers of Blood* (1986) and *Frogs* (1985) that tell episodes from the Hebrew Bible; God sent ten plagues to Egypt when the Pharaoh refused to free the Israelites. Even her paintings of her "Artist Ancestry," like *Monet in His Garden* (1985), suggest struggle. Cataracts took Monet's ability to see clearly later in his life, impacting his capacity to paint as he once had. Beerman painted him wearing a wide-brimmed hat, which deflected the sunlight's glare that made looking difficult for him.

With so much cruelty, why not slide into defeatism? The answer for characters found in Theatre of the Absurd was to always watch for a glimmer of hope, even if what they waited and watched for never arrived. Many of the plays gathered under this umbrella, like *Rhinoceros*, are read for their anti-fascism. While often tragic, and the characters stunted without resolution by the plays' ends, we can consider the productive potential for audiences to resist—to experience absurdity and, upon leaving the theater, attempt to build a society otherwise, instead of being lulled into submission.

More recently, writer, historian, and activist Rebecca Solnit (b. 1961) has contended with how to combat a myriad of late twentieth-century inhumanities. For instance, in a cyclical way, one can see how Ionesco's rhinoceros traded in green skin—a reference to fascist uniforms, like those of the *Garda de Fier* [Iron Guard] in Romania and the *German Ordnungspolizei* [Order Police], from World War II—for polo shirts and khakis in the 2017 white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. Yet, Solnit does not outright despair. To be civically engaged means to face and address realities, not deny them. "Hope" as the basis for action, for her, is not a sunny understanding of everything as being fine, but rather, is "an account of complexities and uncertainties, with openings."[4] There in these openings lie further productive potential, spaces to bring about change toward social justice, instead of the inaction of both optimists—who believe everything is going to be fine—and pessimists—who believe it won't.

Beerman's title image *Nothing has Changed* (1999) shows a woman with her eyes closed. If only she would open her eyes, she would see that things do change—sometimes more slowly than one would like, and sometimes in a non-linear way, but if history shows anything, it shows that change is constant. We can think about Beerman's own artistic biography as an example. In a 1971 *New York Times* review of her solo show at the Brooklyn Museum—the museum's first for a "woman" artist—an art critic started his review alleging, "Mrs. Beerman is not an artist." Seven years later, the same critic reviewed Beerman's exhibition at then Montclair State College. He wrote that he and others had misunderstood her art previously, reversing his appraisal.[5] This is one small example of a single critical response. Many more changes are needed for a truly just and equitable society, such as to implement correctives to the underrepresentation of minoritized artists. As Solnit suggests, it is imperative that we do not overlook the importance of transformative victories, even small ones, as we continue doing the work needed.

For Beerman, the way to address reality was to take up the action of making art, to work through uncertainties with thick layers of paint, at times mixing in thumbtacks, sequins, and other—maybe even comedic—materials. For gallerists, to curate with activism means to present works like Beerman's that challenge viewers who may want to merely look away. For teachers, Beerman's artwork offers the starting point for numerous conversation threads, learning from students while encouraging them to experience the warnings Beerman presents with her work and the critical potential that comes from the artistic process. For viewers, the answer is to find one's own way to engage. To create and uphold a just society is a constant process, given the absurdity of lived experience.

Thank you to theater artist Kerry McGee and historian Roxanne Judice for their insights that helped shape this essay.
[1] Miriam Beerman, "Artist's Statement," accessed August 9, 2022, https://www.miriambeerman.com/artists-statement/.
[2] Ionesco was born in Romania but lived much of his childhood in France. Upon his parents' divorce, he returned to Romania, but eventually moved his own wife and child to France during World War II.
[3] Dramatist Martin Esslin coined the phrase "The Theater of the Absurd" based on Albert Camus' earlier definition of the "absurd" as the illogical, not the ridiculous, such as in Camus' philosophical essay "The Myth of Sisyphus" (1942). For Esslin, other theatrical forms, like Existentialist theatre, may renounce the absurdity of the human condition, but "The Theatre of the Absurd" "presents it in being." Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1961), 25.
[4] Rebecca Solnit, *Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016), xiii-xiv. Solnit considers varied topics with her writing, which she lists on her website as including feminism, western and indigenous history, popular power, social change and insurrection, wandering and walking, as well as hope and disaster. She discusses contemporary and historical authoritarianism in several of her pieces.
[5] See David L. Shirey, "'Enduring Beast' at the Brooklyn," *New York Times* (November 21, 1971): A17; and "In Montclair, the Animal Kingdom," *New York Times* (February 19, 1978): NJ28.

COREY DZENKO, PhD
Associate Professor of Art History, Department of Art and Design

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The Estate of Miriam Beerman would like to thank James Yarosh for bringing this show into existence and for the profound faith and trust that James has shown in Miriam's art. As more and more people come to appreciate Miriam's vision, James has been there to light the way.

We would also like to thank Paula Gottesman for her unstinting support of Miriam for so many years. Her keen eye and judgment were always rock solid. There are not enough words to say thank you.

With gratitude to Monmouth University, we dedicate this show to the memory of Jerry Gottesman.

MIRIAM BEERMAN, *Flame*, 1999, 68in x 67in, oil, collage on canvas

MIRIAM BEERMAN, *Gulag (Feeding the Muse)*, 1990, 71 in x 119 in, oil on canvas.

MIRIAM BEERMAN: (1923-2022) NOTHING HAS CHANGED Exhibit at Monmouth University | September 6 - December 11, 2022

PHOTO: Matthew Aquino

MIRIAM BEERMAN - EXPRESSING THE CHAOS: A 50 minute artist documentary by director Jonathan Gruber streaming on Amazon Prime and YouTube

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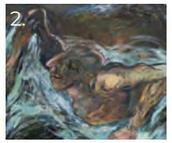

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1. MIRIAM BEERMAN, *Monet in His Garden*, 1985, 72 in x 65 in, oil on canvas.

2. MIRIAM BEERMAN, *Swimmer*, 1978, 52 in x 58 in, oil on canvas.

3. MIRIAM BEERMAN, *Untitled*, circa 1985, approx 60 in x 60 in, oil on canvas.

4. MIIRIAM BEERMAN, *Large Horizontal Head*, 1963, approx. 77 in x 59 in, oil on canvas.

5. MIRIAM BEERMAN, *Couple, Rider of an Unruly Horse*, 1989, 72 in x 54 in, oil on canvas.

6. MIRIAM BEERMAN, *Untitled*, circa 1990, 65 in x 77 in, oil on canvas.

7. MIRIAM BEERMAN, *Insect Rising*, 1989, 75 in x 86 in, oil on canvas.

8. MIRIAM BEERMAN, *Spirit Self*, circa 1990, 22 in x 28 in, oil on canvas.

9. MIRIAM BEERMAN, *Go On*, circa 1990, 54 in x 60 in, oil on canvas.

10. MIRIAM BEERMAN, *The Plagues (Frogs)*, 1985, 71 in x 119 in, oil on canvas.

ARTIST BIO

Miriam Beerman (1923-2022) always shared how she knew she would be an artist since she was seven years old. She began her formal artistic training under John Frazier (American, 1899-1966) at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), earning a BFA degree in 1945. After RISD, Beerman studied with Yasuo Kuniyoshi (American, b. Japan, 1893-1953) at the Art Students League in New York and continued her artistic training with Abstract Expressionist Adja Yunkers (American, b. Russia, 1900-1983) at the New School for Social Research.

From 1954 to 1956, Beerman received two consecutive Fulbright Scholarships to study in Paris under Stanley William Hayter (British, 1901-1988), whom she admired as part of the Parisian avant-garde. However, Beerman found Hayter's studio, Atelier 17, too unruly and instead chose to work in her small hotel room her first year there. At the start of her second year, she befriended another American artist, and the two shared a spacious apartment/studio. The building, once occupied by Picasso, was ideal for painting, with large walls and abundant natural light from a wall of windows. As part of the scholarship, Beerman was required to have her work critiqued monthly by French art historian Marcel Brion (1895-1984).

After Paris, Beerman returned to the United States, moving to Long Island. Within a few years, her purely Abstract Expressionist quality morphed into Expressionist figurative work with a heavy surface quality that more consistently addressed worldly events. During the 1960s and 70s, Beerman's personal life evolved—she married, moved to Brooklyn, and gave birth to a son—while she continued to develop her somber images of figures and animals and solidified her characteristic style of abstract brushwork, textured surface, and dark colors. These formative years brought about her signature larger-than-life canvases that demand to be seen. After 13 years in Brooklyn, Beerman and her family moved to Montclair, New Jersey, and within a year, her husband unexpectedly died. Beerman's work continued in much the same vein—giving form and faces to the primal scream of humanity.

With a firm grasp of her personal approach to art-making, Beerman continued to achieve great milestones and receive numerous honors. In 1971, her work formed one of the first female solo exhibitions at the Brooklyn Museum. To date, Beerman's work has been recognized for its brilliance in over 35 solo exhibitions. Additionally, she was awarded residency fellowships in Ossabaw Island, Georgia (1978); Burston Graphic Center, Jerusalem, Israel (1980); Cassis, France (1980); Virginia Center for Creative Arts (yearly, 1984-1998, 2000-2002); and Banf Center, Alberta, Canada (1987). Her additional honors include the New Jersey State Council on the Arts Grants (1978, 1983, 1987), Joan Mitchell Foundation Grant Award (1994), Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant (2000), and RISD Alumni Achievement Award (2015).

Examples of Beerman's work are represented in numerous public collections, including the Brooklyn Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Gallery of Art, New Jersey State Museum, Whitney Museum of American Art, Phillips Collection, National Museum of Women in the Arts, National Portrait Gallery, Victoria & Albert Museum, Fitzwilliam Museum in England, and many more.

The above updated Miriam Beerman biography includes text by Marisa Pascucci from the 2007 Everson Museum of Art exhibit catalog: Miriam Beerman: Eloquent Pain(t)

"I HAVE SPENT MOST OF MY LIFE CREATING IMAGES THAT ARE RESPONSES TO THE BRUTALITY OF OUR TIME. I AM REMINDED CONSTANTLY OF THE WORLD'S INJUSTICE. IT WEIGHS UPON MY MIND AND BODY. THEREFORE, I SEEK THE BEAUTY AND THE VIGOR OF THE PAINT AND THE POETRY THAT INSPIRES THE ACT OF PAINTING."

- MIRIAM BEERMAN

MONMOUTH UNIVERSITY

PRESENTS

MIRIAM BEERMAN

1923 - 2022

NOTHING HAS CHANGED

September 6 - December 11, 2022

RECEPTION DATES:
Thursday, September 22, 6-9 PM
Sunday, December 11, 1-4 PM
Rechnitz Hall DiMattio Gallery

WITH GUEST CURATOR

JAMES YAROSH

@jamesyarosh

EXHIBIT INFORMATION

Monmouth University
DiMattio Gallery at Rechnitz Hall
Open Monday - Friday 10 am - 5 pm
400 Cedar Avenue
West Long Branch, NJ 07764
732.923.4786
monmouth.edu/MCA

James Yarosh Associates Fine Art Gallery
Open Saturday 12-4pm and by appt.
45 E. Main Street, 2nd Floor Loft
Holmdel, NJ 07733
732.539.8859
jamesyarosh.com