
CORAL WOODBURY: REVISED EDITION

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Available Artwork – <https://privateviews.artlogic.net/2/d74fbe0c6bb6d995533b4f/>

Abigail Ogilvy Gallery is proud to present *Revised Edition*, a solo show of paintings by artist Coral Woodbury. Focused through a new, more inclusive and representative art historical lens, Woodbury explores those who have been overlooked by a world centered on the accomplishments of male artists. She critically reinterprets Western artistic heritage from a feminist perspective, bringing overdue focus and reverence to the long line of women artists who worked without recognition or enduring respect. Through this body of work, Woodbury presents profiles of a multitude of female artists, superimposing their image on the very pages of art history that sought to omit them.

Barely a generation ago, art history texts routinely excluded women artists entirely. Woodbury's portraits and multi-figure paintings critically reinterpret Western artistic masterpieces from an intersectional feminist perspective. Using the pages of one such preeminent textbook as a ground, Woodbury inks portraits of women artists over images from the well-known canon of *Janson's History of Art*. In parallel with this series, she also repaints masterpieces from the textbook, but with the figures recast. Instead of a Madonna or paterfamilias portrait, Woodbury inserts images of female artists drawn from photographs and their own work. As a historian gazing backward, and as an artist creating anew, her paintings are a way to heal the injustices and omissions of art history. "*Revised Edition* is a research study as much as it is an art project, and an honoring of the women denied a place in art history," Woodbury explains, "I will not have run out of them when I have filled every page."

When discussing her painting *Daughters of Unfinished History*, an impressive rendition of an 1882 painting by Sargent, Woodbury says: "As part of my work to rectify the omissions of art history, I re-envision masterpieces from the canon, creating space for

women in both the paintings and the story of art. I began this project by looking at a canvas beloved by me, and I think all the patrons of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: Sargent's *The Daughters of Edward Darley Boit*. In my quadruple portrait, *The Daughters of Unfinished History: Asawa, Thesleff, Bell, Vincenzo*, I recast Sargent's enigmatic painting of the four young sisters of means as four overlooked women artists. The artists, left to right, are Ruth Asawa; Ellen Thesleff; Vanessa Bell; and Una Vincenzo, Lady Troubridge. As I painted and these figures emerged on my canvas, I imagined what it would be like to have them all together, as if at the proverbial dinner party. What would they say to each other? To me? Though they differ by nation and century, they shared the drive of creators, revolted against conventions, and suffered from prejudice and repression."

In her "Artifacts" series," Woodbury writes: "I have recently focused oil paintings on the material culture of women artists, combining my lifelong fascination with the stories and human connections embodied in objects, and my love for the kind of research I did for over a decade in the museum field. It is wonderful to find an archival studio photograph, but I also love the glimpse across time that a photo of a meal enjoyed with loved ones, or the setting of a bedroom or sitting room provide. I zoom in on the details of these photos to examine and record the way their lives were lived. I am also drawn to the adornments of women, their garments and jewelry. This relates to earlier work, as well, in which clothing evokes both presence and absence, fragility and protection, wear and repair, covering and uncovering. It echoes the body when there is no longer a body, only a tender ghost of humanity. These are portraits but not by describing a face. There is an intimacy in these precious remainders."

As a historian and as an artist, **Coral Woodbury** (b. 1971, NY) has long worked internationally, beginning with a residency in Italy with *Rosenclaire*, her mentors for 30 years. She has been honored with a grant from the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities and has exhibited at Opening Press Week of the 58th Venice Biennale, the Taragaon Museum in Kathmandu, and in the unsanctioned #00Bielal de la Habana in Cuba. In 2020 her work was selected for Area Code art fair. Woodbury is represented by Abigail Ogilvy Gallery, Boston.