

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



MONIQUE LUCHETTI
ONE FOR SORROW, TWO FOR MIRTH
May 20 - July 2, 2022

Virtual Exhibition Opening
Friday, May 20, 2022
at 11:00 AM

Lola Shepard is pleased to present **ONE FOR SORROW, TWO FOR MIRTH**, an online solo exhibition featuring 25 works on paper by **MONIQUE LUCHETTI**. The online exhibition will be viewable to the public beginning on **Friday, May 20, 2022, at 11:00 AM** and will run on the website from May 20 to July 2, 2022.

As one of the most exquisite creatures on earth, birds are often regarded as symbols of freedom, grace, beauty, and love. With their rich array of colors and unmatched ability to compose a symphony of songs, birds of all species easily capture our collective attention and imaginations. Ecologically, birds are a critical element to nearly every living thing on earth but when avian species are lost, due to habitat encroachment or through harmful pesticides and pollution, their particular functions and benefits in the biosphere disappear too. Recognized as one of the most important indicators of the state of the environment, our majestic, feathered friends' fates are closely intertwined with ours.

In **ONE FOR SORROW, TWO FOR MIRTH**, Monique Luchetti draws our attention to the symbiotic relationship between humans, the animal kingdom, and our natural world. Using her artwork to communicate and address the importance of environmental and animal conservation, Luchetti has developed a body of work depicting bird study-skins (as the bird specimens are called) from ornithology collections she photographed. Her mixed media artwork takes an unflinching look at the harmful effects of human intervention on the world and, as the artist states, serves "*as a meditation on the contradiction inherent in our rush to collect, classify, and catalog the world, even as we go about destroying it.*"

Utilizing her photographs as a reference, Luchetti skillfully renders the taxidermied birds in graphite pencil on Nepalese lokta paper. In portraying the winged creatures as they lay in their unnatural position -on their back, usually with their head thrown back and feet crossed in repose- one is reminded of the post-mortem photography of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. With gesso, watercolor, and gouache, she then overlays colorful abstractions or flora on the most vulnerable yet powerful location on their body - the heart center and solar plexus. Says Luchetti *"The abstractions for me depict the concept of the soul, the individual life force that is so absent among the countless lifeless bodies in the drawers of the museums. The drawings are memorials, tagged with a symbolic life I have imagined for them, a turn toward the consciousness that extends beyond the physical body."*

Luchetti could easily be considered a portrait painter, using birds instead of the human figure as her subject matter. She depicts, close-up, a variety of avian specimens from shorebirds such as the egret to landbirds like the Australian Magpie and Bachman Warbler. Many of her single portraits include a description **which identifies** their particular bird species, their common name, the year of death, and the ornithology collection that houses the study skin. Displaying the inner essence of her subject with brightly colored floral vegetation or geometric patterning, Luchetti's evocative and striking drawings are a heartfelt tribute to a life once lived.

In the panoramic composition *Forget-Me-Not*, Luchetti brings together a concert of endangered and vulnerable bird species, such as the Mountain Plover, the American Peregrine Falcon, and the Burrowing Owl, into one single work. Luchetti meticulously draws 15 oversized, avifauna, all on their back, as if prepared for burial. Composed of 27 assembled sheets of paper and reaching a height of 7 feet and 17 feet wide, the artist wreaths each inanimate creature with a cornucopia of brightly colored, lush foliage and botanical blooms. The stark, gray, funereal palette of the deceased birds amid the opulent, floral arrangements elicits compassion and sympathy as the viewer is deeply moved by their grim stillness.

Rounding off this exhibition are four works depicting the artist's backyard magnolia tree, all created during the height of the pandemic. Sequestered at her home for many months, Luchetti observed the changing moods of the tree from the dormancy of winter to its full regalia of pink blooms in the spring and into its green summer leafing. Employing pencil and gouache, the abstracted paintings depict the interweaving branches of the tree as shapes and lines. In focusing on the isolated parts of the tree, Luchetti not only searches for the underlying geometry of the tree but the underlying life, suggesting that the parts become an entity in themselves. The inclusion of these works highlights the interdependent relationship between humans, animals, and the environment.

The title of the exhibition refers to the counting nursery rhyme associating corvids as harbingers of good fortune or bad luck. As a key player in cycling nutrients, helping to fertilize ecosystems, and controlling pests, the contributions of the avian population across habitats are vital for people and the planet to thrive. In the context of the exhibition, the more bird species that survive, the merrier the human species will be.

Monique Luchetti lives and works in Brooklyn, NY. She received her M.F.A. in Painting from Ohio State University and a B.F.A. in Sculpture from Virginia Commonwealth University. Luchetti has mounted numerous solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally including the Peale Museum (Baltimore, MD), the Brattleboro Museum (Brattleboro, VT), Western Colorado Center for the Arts (Grand Junction, CO), Augsburg University, (Minneapolis, MN), University of Connecticut (Stamford, CT), Edinboro University (Edinboro, PA), Parkland College (Champaign, IL), Terre Roveresche (Urbino Pesaro, Italy), and CCNOA (Brussels, Belgium).

Luchetti is the recipient of several honors including the Brooklyn Navy Yard public art commission, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, Artists Space: Artist Collective Grant, the Ohio Arts Council Grant, the Edith Fergus Gilmore Funds Award, and the Hosea Puig Award. Her past art residencies include Foundation Obras (Portugal), Joya (Spain), Altos de Chavon (Dominican Republic), and Yaddo (Saratoga Springs, NY).

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