

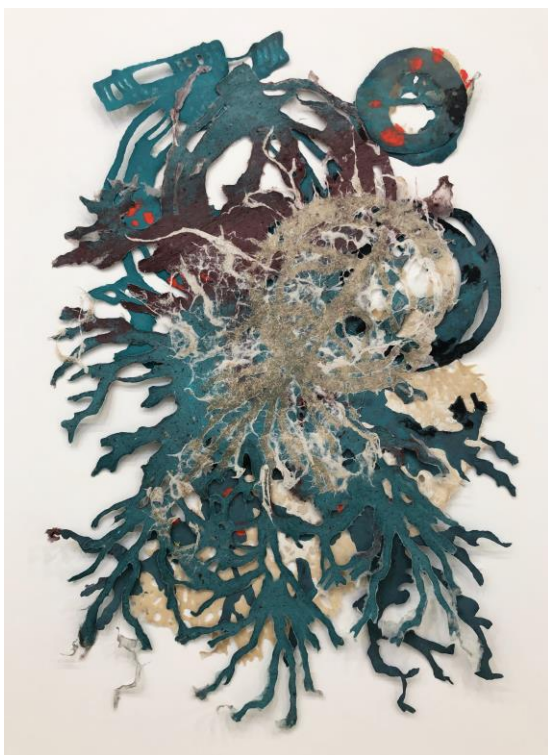
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXHIBITION:

Making Waves:

Resa Blatman, Joan Hall, Karen Lee Sobol

March 13 – May 10, 2020



Joan Hall

The New Living Reef #5, 2020

Handmade paper using kozo, gampi, and abaca,
31 x 21 inches

BOSTON, MA – As the largest habitat on our planet, the Earth's oceans are vast ecosystems of which only a small fraction has been explored. Today, our oceans are greatly endangered by human activity, and recent studies have found that approximately 8 million metric tons of plastic enter the ocean on an annual basis. As this crisis escalates, climate change art attempts to bridge the scientific and visual, making hard data more accessible through an emotional response to art. By helping us process this information, climate change art seeks to affect meaningful change between humans and their environment.

Making Waves presents the work of three women artists, Resa Blatman, Joan Hall, and Karen Lee Sobol, who each use their art to address humankind's relationship to the ocean. Through different media, including painting, printmaking, and mixed media installation, the artists advocate for greater awareness of the climate crisis.

Resa Blatman's paintings and prints draw upon her innate draftsmanship to craft visions of a future climate dystopia. Her work predicts landscapes and seascapes warped by rising tides,



Resa Blatman
Toxic Bloom 2, 2018
Oil and acrylic on panel, 36 x 24 inches

envisioning displaced species within a world in flux. Blatman contrasts her skillfully rendered flora and fauna with dark, turbulent backgrounds, heightening the creeping feeling of unease within her work. While looking towards a chaotic future, Blatman also looks to the past, peppering her work with art historical references. Paintings like *Toxic Bloom 2* and *Refugees* reference Martin Johnson Heade's naturalist landscapes but diverge with frenzied colors and frantic calls to action. Blatman visually articulates the messages of scientific data on climate change - in her paintings, prints, and drawings, human action and inaction have wrought catastrophic natural consequences. The artist gives us hope, however, through the various animals that persist within her tumultuous landscapes - though the conspicuous absence of human figures is telling. Blatman presents an alluringly bleak world in the hope that we may avoid this fate. Her lushly constructed artwork is a warning against this particular glimpse of our possible future.

An avid sailor, Joan Hall works tirelessly to promote marine advocacy through her art. From her home and studio in Jamestown, Rhode Island, Hall sees the effects of climate change firsthand. Non-native, invasive algae species and plastic pollution found in the waters of Narragansett Bay feature prominently in her large-scale mixed media installations. Hall focuses on the use of handmade paper to shape the undulating wave-like forms of her sculptural pieces. Works like *The New Normal* also incorporate various printmaking techniques, using plastics and assorted trash found on local beaches to create collagraphic plates. The resultant prints are a beautiful but brutal reminder of humankind's role in widespread oceanic pollution. In other works, such as *Beneath the Tropic Sea*, Hall directly infuses detritus into the artwork - a visual representation of how pervasive the plastic problem truly is. Ultimately, Hall's goal is to initiate a conversation about the deterioration of our greatest resource - water. The intensive



Joan Hall
The New Normal, 2020
Mixed media, handmade paper, 48 x 62 x 10 inches

process and sheer scale of Hall's work commands attention, confronting the audience with beauty that conceals ecological trouble.

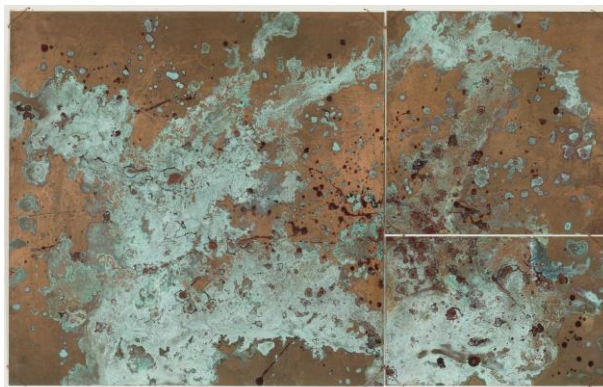
In the face of the devastating effects of climate change, Karen Lee Sobol is determined to remain an optimist. Her paintings reflect a positivity born from deep admiration for the natural world, and a belief in our role as both benefactors and stewards of the environment. Focusing on nature's inherent beauty, Sobol's work is resplendent with splashy colors and bold strokes, hiding human and animal figures within her playful lines. Alongside her message of hope is the ominous presence of escalating



Karen Lee Sobol
Goddess, Greenland, melted, 2019
Mixed media on canvas, 35 x 72 inches

environmental degradation; the juxtaposition is meant to invoke a protective instinct, to call the audience to action. Sobol's *Goddess* series of mixed media paintings on large canvases viscerally depict powerful yet threatened goddesses of the Earth and sea. Her works expound the need for environmental vigilance with a visually arresting heartfelt plea from Mother Nature herself.

With the threat of plastic pollution and warming temperatures, our ocean levels are rising, coral reefs are dying, and invasive algae species are spreading worldwide. Blatman, Hall, and Sobol's response is to create art that is beautifully alarming and cautionary, yet hopeful that their messages can engender ideas for change. *Making Waves* explores the stark realities of climate change through the work of these three artists, and their determination to confront our manmade climate crisis head-on.



Karen Lee Sobol
Sea Change, knowing, 2005
Etched copper plates, 15 x 24 inches

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For high-res images and all press inquiries, please contact:

Richard Baiano | 617.266.1108 | richard@childsgallery.com

Stephanie Bond | 617.266.1108 | stephanie@childsgallery.com

Kathryn Fields | 617.266.1108 | kfields@childsgallery.com