

MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

ANNETTE LEMIEUX: *Things Felt*

April 21 – May 27, 2022

534 West 26th Street, New York



Mitchell-Innes & Nash is pleased to present *Things Felt*, an exhibition of new work by conceptual artist **Annette Lemieux**. On view **April 21–May 27**, the exhibition explores the humanity and indignation of contemporary life through the visual codes of mid-century cinema. Featuring images and objects that showcase Lemieux’s trademark use of readymade imagery, the works provoke tension between the reality of American life and reveries of Americana portrayed in mainstream media. The exhibition marks the artist’s first solo presentation in New York since 2016 and follows her 2017 solo exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

Part of a generation of artists who developed their practices around “Picture Theory” of the late 1970’s and early 80’s, Lemieux has gone on to become a trailblazer in the field of post-Conceptualist painting, sculpture, assemblage and photomontage, drawing influences from Minimalism and pop culture and often employing media images from the 20th century as her source material. Lemieux’s deft use of appropriated imagery in her practice is always tied to contemporary life, its politics and its ever-changing visual codes, and thus her work is always open to new meaning, on both a personal and collective level.

With *Things Felt*, the artist plunges into her signature repertoire of imagery from films, television shows, books and news media while exploring formidable topics of isolation, division and brokenness. *Midnight Sun*, constructed with a still from an episode of the cult television show *The Twilight Zone*, depicts the character of a young artist painting during a catastrophic heat wave that tragically melts the pigments off her canvas. Lemieux uses this imagery as a metaphor for not only the struggle faced by an artist, but the reality that Earth is faced with due to climate change. The artist makes herself present by hanging a custom-made smock recreated using the artist’s measurements to match that of the protagonist’s in the scene on a framed photographic print of the moment. This self-reflexive conceptualization also appears in *Woe*, a recreation of the final scene of Samuel Beckett’s controversial 1965 film, *Film*. In it, the main character played by Buster Keaton and named O attempts to avoid being seen and perceived—a futile endeavor for someone made real only by existing on camera. In her reinterpretation of the film still, Lemieux sits in as O, covering her eyes in a similar futile refusal to be seen, watched or known.

Throughout the exhibition, Lemieux’s work directly references the experience of isolation as grounds for exploring the many cultural and social associations with solitude. Buster Keaton takes center stage, appearing in *Lockdown*, where the artist borrows an image from the film *The Goat* in which Keaton plays a man inadvertently mistaken for a notorious outlaw. Lemieux uses bleach to etch stripes reminiscent of an American flag in black velvet as a backdrop to the narrative of a falsely accused Keaton. The actor appears again in *Houston* as the tragic yet intrepid character from *Steamboat Bill, Jr.*, standing with a broken umbrella in the midst of a cyclone, overlaid by the phrase “HOUSTON / WE HAVE A PROBLEM.” These works serve as a humorous and deadpan acknowledgement of the accumulation of societal dilemmas.

Lemieux reprises her recurring theatrical brick wall motif, currently iterated as *Double Back*. Conceived in the 1990’s, the wall represented artist’s block—her literal interpretation of hitting a brick wall—however currently,

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the meaning has evolved to demonstrate the inability to move forward, politically and socially. Lemieux's use of recognizable and mundane iconography evokes an inescapable familiarity of Americana and, ultimately, a sobering image of a broken society that is at once recognizable yet fractured long ago and continuing to deteriorate. Familiar scenes of film and television provide both an escape and a reminder of the pressing realities of climate catastrophe, crumbling political conditions and a seemingly endless pandemic.

Images Caption #1: Annette Lemieux, *Woe*, 2022, Pigment inkjet on hot press paper, 16 3/4 by 21 3/4 by 2 inches. Courtesy of the artist and Mitchell & Innes & Nash, New York.

ABOUT ANNETTE LEMIEUX

Born in 1957 in Norfolk, Virginia, Lemieux studied at the Hartford Art School, University of Hartford where she received her BFA in 1980. In addition to her recent solo exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, Lemieux's numerous solo shows include the Matrix Gallery, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford; the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York; the Stichting De Appel, Amsterdam; Castello Di Rivoli, Museo d'Arts Contemporanea, Turin, Italy; Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Haus Esters, Krefeld, Germany; Museo de Arte Carrillo Gill, Mexico City; and the Davis Museum and Cultural Center at Wellesley College.

Lemieux's work can be found in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Harvard Art Museum/Fogg, Cambridge; Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Krannert Art Museum, Champaign; Milwaukee Art Museum; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Art Institute of Chicago; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Princeton University Art Museum; Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Victoria & Albert Museum, London; Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven; among others. Lemieux has received awards and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pollock/Krasner Foundation, the Howard Foundation Fellowship, Brown University, and the Kaiser Wilhelm Museum in Germany. In 2009 Lemieux received an Honorary Doctorate in Fine Arts from Montserrat College of Art.

ABOUT MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

Founded by Lucy Mitchell-Innes and David Nash, who previously headed the worldwide Contemporary and Impressionist & Modern Art divisions of Sotheby's, Mitchell-Innes & Nash places exemplary contemporary artists within a historical context, revealing a continuity of ideas and aesthetic virtuosity from the Modern era through the present day. Lucy Mitchell-Innes is also a member of the selection committee of Art Basel and a former president of the Art Dealers Association of America. Mitchell-Innes & Nash's renowned exhibition program fosters excellence within artistic practice, while forging an informed dialogue between emerging and established internationally recognized artists. From acclaimed surveys of 20th century masters, such as Jean Arp, Anthony Caro, Jay DeFeo, Willem de Kooning, Leon Kossoff, Kenneth Noland, Roy Lichtenstein, and Nicolas de Stael, to solo exhibitions of Sarah Braman, Keltie Ferris, Daniel Lefcourt, Eddie Martinez, Pope.L, Martha Rosler, and Jessica Stockholder, Mitchell-Innes & Nash has proven expertise in both advancing the careers of emerging artists and maintaining the superior standard set by established artists.

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