

MARTOS GALLERY

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Aura Rosenberg *The Space Between Us*

OPENING THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH, 6 - 8 PM

November 14, 2024 - January 31, 2025

"Inanimate objects sometimes appear endowed with a strange power of sight. A statue notices, a tower watches, the face of an edifice contemplates." - Victor Hugo

The Space Between Us begins with the figures of *Charging Bull* and *Fearless Girl* in New York City's Financial district. Private individuals produced these unsolicited works; nevertheless, they are public sculptures.

In 1989, Arturo Di Modica made *Charging Bull* in homage to the American entrepreneurial spirit and installed it surreptitiously in front of the New York Stock Exchange. The city immediately moved it to Bowling Green, where it stood alone for twenty-eight years.

In 2017, a hedge fund managed primarily by women commissioned Kristen Visbal to make the *Fearless Girl* statue and, on International Women's Day, placed her opposite the bull. She held that position for a year and nine months until Di Modica won his battle to remove her. City authorities then moved her opposite the stock exchange, where she now stands.

When *Charging Bull* and *Fearless Girl* stood together as a pair, their popularity perhaps had less to do with their roles as capitalist emblems than with the subconscious psychosexual drives animating them. Tourists, unaware, immersed themselves in the space between them, a space filled with the seduction of power, the desire for innocence, the allure of bestiality. Together, the two statues animated a direct confrontation with what is ordinarily repressed; they possessed an unforeseen power to flaunt their intended meanings.

The myth of the Minotaur describes a creature - half-bull, half-man - spawned by the passion between a woman and a bull.

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". . the labyrinth functions as a model of the mind. The Minotaur is a repressed sector of the psyche, locked up and kept that way through periodic sacrifices."

The Minotaur was Picasso's alter ego. His Vollard Suite of prints, 1930 – 37, often depicts the Minotaur with a young girl. During this period, Picasso was romantically involved with Maria Therese, whom he met when she was seventeen and he was forty-five. In some prints, a young girl is leading a blind Minotaur. Of this, Picasso said, "There is, in fact, only love that matters.... And they should put out the eyes of painters as they do to goldfinches to make them sing better."

Charging Bull and *Fearless Girl* stirred associations that gave rise to the work in this show.

The show's lenticular prints, drawings and 3D figures reflect Rosenberg's continued interest in statues, which she first addressed in *Statues Also Fall in Love*, her 2019 exhibition at Martos Gallery. That show comprised lenticular prints that flipped back and forth between shots of classical marble statues in museums and photos of bodies in identical poses sourced from online porn sites. These juxtapositions brought the statues back to the domain of everyday desire that the propriety of the museum had obscured. The lenticular prints in *The Space Between Us* feature drawings of the bull and girl, other drawings from Picasso's Vollard Suite, and images of labyrinths.

Included in this show is a film, *The Space Between Us*, co-directed by the novelist and filmmaker Veronica Gonzalez Peña, who also wrote the script, and Aura Rosenberg. Gonzalez Peña based her script on the myth of Ariadne and the Minotaur. In her version, Ariadne, the Minotaur's sister, takes center stage, for it is she who leads Theseus into the heart of the labyrinth to kill her brother. In doing so Ariadne turns against her mother and her father to aid Theseus in vanquishing the monster within.

The Space Between Us coincides with Rosenberg's solo exhibition *Statues Also Fall In Love*, curated by Barbara Piwowska, at Muzeum Sztuki in Lodz, Poland.