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First Exhibition of Work by Ilene Vultaggio, Creator of Iconic Designs for AriZona Beverage Company



Nudes: New Work by Ilene Vultaggio

December 13, 2012—January 5, 2013, at Tria Gallery, New York

Tria Gallery presents **Nudes: New Work by Ilene Vultaggio**, the first exhibition of Vultaggio's never-before-seen drawings, on view in a pop-up show, December 13, 2012, through January 5, 2013. The opening night reception is on Thursday, December 13, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Ilene Vultaggio has been a working artist for over 30 years but has never exhibited publicly. She is best known as the creator of the first eye-catching designs that would shape the AriZona Beverage Company brand. Twenty years ago, Vultaggio's husband Don, co-founder of the brand, asked her to draw a logo that would stand out from all the other beverages on the market.

Borrowing from the motif of their then south-western inspired home in Queens, Vultaggio created the drawing on which the graphic for the company logo was created. She also created the cherry blossoms on AriZona's Green Tea bottle. While these designs are globally recognizable, this exhibition brings to light Vultaggio's private art practice for the first time.

"My art has been my passion since I was a teenager, and I've taken an interesting journey to get to this moment," says Vultaggio. "From my private studio practice, to my designs for AriZona, I am excited and proud to finally show my art in a gallery setting."

The exhibition at Tria Gallery includes approximately 30 works from the last eight years. For this series of works, Vultaggio focused on the male and female nude, in various poses. All are pastel and charcoal on paper.

Franklin Perrell, former chief curator of Nassau County Museum of Art and current Executive Director of the Roslyn Landmark Society, describes Vultaggio's work:

"Vultaggio's realist nudes eschew academic as well as cosmetic idealism. Eros is supplanted by direct transcriptions which are inevitably heroic: honest to the extreme, they evoke the palpability of flesh as a document of a life's history. Emphatic with gravity and materiality, strength yet vulnerability, the swollen or attenuated contours evoke comparison to the figures of Lucien Freud or Francis Bacon. The forthrightness of the artist's perception impels the viewer's immediate recognition and familiarity, indeed an intimacy, possibly uncomfortable, with the subject. In a manner reminiscent of Manet in the 19th century, they are transcriptions that are at odds with their contemporary context.

While they look unfamiliar, they are linked to past tradition, especially in the baroque. For Vultaggio, while the artistic sublime is achieved through fidelity to the observed, this quality arises from the timeless and universal character of her subject, to which she ascribes a sensibility that can best be described as monumental. Vultaggio's distinctive palette, emphasizing terracotta hues and deep tonal contrasts, gives an ancient and timeless aura to these representations. The product of several years of studio observation and study, these works project a humanistic empathy, even compassion, or identification, with her subject that hearkens to a romanticism of time past, with hints of such heroic precursors as Rodin and Michelangelo."

Born and raised in Brooklyn, Vultaggio went to Hunter College and graduated with a BA in art and education. She is a member of the New York Art Students League; and has taken classes at the Brooklyn Botanical Garden and New York Botanical Garden, where she focused on watercolor and botanical illustration. She currently lives in Long Island and uses studio space at the Nassau County Museum of Art.

It is the mission of **Tria Gallery** to exhibit a balance of established artists with impressive resumes and exciting young talent, showing representational and abstract work, painting, sculpture, mixed media and installations. The common denominator is that the Tria artist has a unique, authentic voice and a compelling body of work which the directors feel should be given an audience.

Tria is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 11:00 to 6:00, or by appointment. Holiday hours to be announced. For more information, please visit www.triagallerynyc.com.