



Mary Frank, *The Sea Around Us*, 2022. Oil, acrylic, and collage on board, 36 x 48 in

Mary Frank:  
*What Color  
Courage?*

November 17 –  
December 22, 2022

*What Color Courage?*

*Living color; rooting embedded  
rising up yet  
gravity seeking  
refuged unknowingly  
Clustered species questing  
Trembling scalding and sacrificial  
I/we witness to this, our world now*

- Mary Frank

On November 17, continuing through December 22, DC Moore Gallery will present *What Color Courage?*, an exhibition of new and historic work by Mary Frank (b. 1933), featuring mixed media paintings, painted stones, sculptures, along with several groups of works on paper from 1990-2022.

Mary Frank's new paintings contain layered elements that recall the artist's engagement with other mediums, incorporating photographs of her own early sculptures, painted stones, and prints collaged onto their surfaces. This movement back and forth between two and three

dimensional surfaces creates a narrative connecting the work, spinning together a sort of cosmos bound by the repetition and transformation of these images.

Mythical human/animal hybrids and silhouetted figures are placed in stark landscapes dramatized by swirling elemental color, fiery crimsons and deep blues. Mary's use of mythological imagery imbues the work with a sense of timelessness, however, the raw urgency of expression makes it clear that the work is primarily concerned with what it means to be alive right now. Mary explains that for her, to work now in any form— as an artist or activist— one cannot ignore the world as it currently is in all its complexity.

The exhibition includes two papier-maché sculptures from the 1980s, *Chimera* (1984), and *Trajectories* (1988-89). Like her recent paintings, these works relate outwardly to primal, universal themes and inwardly to the microcosm of Mary's work. For *Chimera*, she used discarded monoprints as the material for the papier-maché. The chimera, a lion-antelope-serpent hybrid from ancient Greek mythology, is at once an image of brutality and of tenderness, mutable and never-ending.

As Mary describes, her work is a visceral response to the act of bearing witness to the world in a time of crisis. Her iconography— tempests, fire, flood— evoke the reality of frequent and escalating natural disasters, and their impact on human and animal lives. In that spirit, the artist would like to dedicate this show to all the people working to save the planet.



Mary Frank, *Chimera*, 1984. Papier-maché, 34 x 60 x 24 in

DC Moore Gallery specializes in contemporary and twentieth-century art. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10am-6pm. For more information, photographs, or to arrange a viewing please call 212-247-2111 or email Caroline Magavern at [cmagavern@dcmooregallery.com](mailto:cmagavern@dcmooregallery.com).

## About Mary Frank

**Mary Frank** was born in England in 1933 and came to New York in 1940, fleeing the bombings of London during World War II. While still in high school, she studied modern dance with Martha Graham and José Limon. In 1950, she studied drawing with Max Beckmann and later studied life-drawing with Hans Hofmann. Mary first came to prominence as a sculptor in the 1950s, working in wood and clay.

The artist has been the subject of numerous solo museum and gallery exhibitions, including the 2022 retrospective exhibition, *Mary Frank: The Observing Heart*, at the Samuel Dorsky Museum in New Paltz, NY, accompanied by a catalogue with essay by curator David Hornung, and *Mary Frank: Finding My Way Home*, which originated at the Asheville Art Museum, Asheville, NC, in 2014 and traveled to the Butler Institute in Youngstown, OH, in 2015. Work by Mary Frank was included in the Whitney Museum's 2020 exhibition, *Making Knowing: Craft in Art, 1950 – 2019*, and the Brooklyn Museum's 2020 exhibition, *Out of Place: A Feminist Look at the Collection*.

Eakins Press Foundation has published two collaborations between Mary Frank and the environmental activist and author Terry Tempest Williams, the 2022 catalogue *What My Body Knows* and the 2020 catalogue *A Burning Testament*. Illustrations by Mary Frank were projected during *Falling Out of Time*, a song cycle composed by Osvaldo Golijov, which premiered in New York in 2022. In 2017, a solo exhibition at DC Moore Gallery coincided with the publication of the monograph, *Pilgrimage: Photographs by Mary Frank*, by the Eakins Press Foundation with texts by the poet and critic John Yau and Terry Tempest Williams. In 2014, the documentary film, *Visions of Mary Frank*, was produced and released by filmmaker John Cohen.

Mary Frank's work is in many public collections, including, The Art Institute of Chicago, IL; The Brooklyn Museum, NY; Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AR; The Fogg Art Museum, MA; The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; The Jewish Museum, NY; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; The Morgan Library and Museum, NY; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA; the Museum of Modern Art, NY; The National Museum of American Art, Washington, DC; Storm King Art Center, NY; The Whitney Museum, NY; and The Yale University Art Gallery, CT.

Mary Frank lives and works in New York City and Bearsville, NY.

The catalogues *A Burning Testament* and *What My Body Knows*, published by Eakins Press Foundation, and *Mary Frank: The Observing Heart*, published by the Samuel Dorsky Museum, are available for purchase at DC Moore Gallery.