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LYNDA BENGLIS  
222 BOWERY (1972-PRESENT)



The agile sculpture of Lynda Benglis (b. 1941) exists at a unique intersection between artistic practice and feminist discourse. By employing a wide range of materials, including wax, latex, polyurethane foam, and metal, Benglis has undertaken an examination of materiality and form, a practice that both mirrors and critiques the societal examination of the female body. Upon her arrival in New York in the 1960s, Benglis set her work in opposition to the overtly masculine discipline of Minimalism with her process-oriented, sculptural work. At the same time, she began creating videos that expanded her exploration of female sexuality and identity, with humor, self-examination, and aggression. Since the 1960s, Benglis has shown nationally and internationally.



including solo exhibitions in India and New Zealand, and her work is included in many public collections, including the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis; the Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art in Sapporo, Japan; and the Museum of Modern Art in New York.



Excerpt from the Bowery Artist Tribute interview October 11, 2007 available at boweryartisttribute.org



I had very close friends, Mike Goldberg and Lynn Umlauf, [who] lived in this building, and I acquired this room when I found out that a friend of [Mike's] was moving out. He lived here and worked here and in Washington, where he was Jackie Kennedy's best friend. He was a fellow that would come in at night in a tuxedo and then go back out in leather to the West Side; a great guy who had artistic aspirations. So I got his space. I've lived here for over thirty years. It's one of my favorite places, because [of] different people who have lived here. William Burroughs was here.

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# LYNDA BENGLIS

When I would go up and down the hallway he would hug one side of the hallway and I would hug the other because we were equally afraid of one another. He was shy and I was shy. Burroughs is now



gone, but John Giorno is here. John was always here, and Mike was always here before I was here. It's kind of, in a way, like a dormitory. John has had the Buddhist meetings here. We would all use the same bathroom, at one point—it was his private bathroom upstairs. So you can imagine living here and having to go upstairs to take a shower,

and maybe you had a toilet outside in the hall. It was very much an informal situation. It was only until we bought this space, maybe ten years ago, that we put in a functional kind of bathroom here. It was very informal, and very creative. It still is, Mike still paints next door, Lynn has her studio, John paints here. I did a lot of work here. I did a lot of gold leafing here, and I was sleeping with all this plaster, sleeping with all this gold leaf, in this same bed. This same pull-out bed I've had since I got here. Nothing's changed. I've just gathered more furniture.

BOWERY ARTIST TRIBUTE

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**CAPTIONS**

1—Lynda Benglis with gold-leaf sculpture in her studio at 222 Bowery, 1981. Courtesy Lynda Benglis

2—Lynda Benglis interviewed in her studio at 222 Bowery, October 11, 2007

3—Lynda Benglis with a fan from her Peacock series in her studio at 222 Bowery, 1979. Courtesy Lynda Benglis

4—Lynda Benglis, *Centraband*, 1969, poured latex, 405 by 109 in (1,028.7 x 276.9 cm). Courtesy Lynda Benglis

5—Lynda Benglis with torso pieces in her studio at 222 Bowery, 1974. Courtesy Lynda Benglis

6—Doorway to Lynda Benglis Studio, 2007

7—Lynda Benglis, *Chimera*, 1968, cast bronze fountain, 55 by 96 by 52 in (139.7 x 243.8 x 132.1 cm). Courtesy Lynda Benglis



**The Bowery Timeline**

- 1843 The Virginia Minstrels perform the first all-blackface program to sold-out crowd at the Bowery Amphitheatre at 37-39 Bowery.
- 1845 City Council spends \$116,000 to build Union Square, named for the union of Bowery, Broadway, and 14th Street.
- 1847 Astor Place Theater is built to present Italian opera, currently in vogue. New York's theater district begins to move uptown.
- 1848 The Bowery between Union Square and Cooper Square is renamed 4th Avenue.
- 1852 National Theater at 104 Bowery hosts the first stage production of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.
- 1858 Chinese-American tobacconist Ah Ken sets up the first downtown Chinese-owned business on Park Row.