

WELANCORA GALLERY
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Welancora Gallery

Presents

12 Years: Work by Helen Evans Ramsaran

October 20-December 1, 2019

Welancora Gallery is pleased to present *12 Years*, a monographic exhibition of sculpture by **Helen Evans Ramsaran**, from **October 20 through December 1, 2019**. This will be Helen's first solo show at the gallery located at 33 Herkimer Street, Brooklyn, NY.

12 Years is a continuation of ideas Ramsaran presented in her solo exhibition *Extinction: Signals of Alarm* at Wilmer Jennings Gallery, in 2017. The work on view explores the effects of climate change on life sustaining systems and resources, specifically marine ecosystems. This presentation also touches on themes related to extinction and the evolution of man and other animal species as depicted in Ramsaran's abstract, bronze interpretation of Olduvai Gorge; prehistoric animals; ancient shrines; and, white clay renderings of bleached coral reef.



The title of the show is derived from a warning, in 2018, by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that only 12 years remain for global warming to be kept to a maximum of 1.5C, beyond which even half a degree will significantly worsen the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people.



Created in the early 1990s, many of Ramsaran's bronze work speak of ancient relics, primordial worlds and an era in ruin. On the occasion of Ramsaran's traveling solo show at the Chrysler Museum in Virginia and its final destination at the Studio Museum in Harlem in 1994, Okwui Enwezor the former Director of the Haus Der Kunst, art critic, and editor of *NKA: A Journal of Contemporary African Art* noted that "Many of Ramsaran's works come from her scrupulous distillation of her experiences while living and traveling through Africa (Egypt, Ghana,

Ivory Coast, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe) in the 1980s. In her sculptures spindly, attenuated forms, the body's essence fills the exhibition space with an explosive, troubling aura. Connections to the body's temporal habitat have been substituted with its flight from the cage".

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About the Artist: Helen Evans Ramsaran was born in Bryan, Texas in 1943. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Art Education (1965) and an MFA in sculpture (1968) from Ohio State University where she studied bronze casting with David Black and welding with John Freeman. She moved to New York in 1973 and began teaching sculpture and ceramics at the City University of New York in 1974, where she retired in 2008. In the early eighties, Ramsaran spent several months casting sculpture in bronze in Pietrasanta, Italy. During that time she traveled to Greece, Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Morocco, and Western Europe.

In the mid-eighties, she spent a year traveling throughout Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, and Ethiopia. During this pivotal moment in her development as an artist, Ramsaran worked with the highly acclaimed stone carvers of Zimbabwe and experienced the overwhelming presence of granite boulders adorned with prehistoric, red ochre paintings of warriors and animals. Those rock paintings were Ramsaran's first real encounter with prehistoric Africa and formed a new link in her own neglected history.

During the intervening years, Ramsaran exhibited extensively throughout the world with a total of seven international exhibitions in Japan, Paris, and Johannesburg. She has participated in numerous group exhibitions with many artists including Nari Ward, Howardena Pindell, Melvin Edwards, Barbara Chase Riboud, Radcliff Bailey, Jack Whitten, Tyrone Mitchell, and Elizabeth Catlett. Ramsaran continues to travel throughout the world, splitting her time between New York, Europe, and Africa.

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Images above:

Legacy from Olduvai, 1990, Bronze, 16 x 8 x 12 inches

Ghost Species 17, 2019, Carved Clay, 9 x 11 inches