



Exhibitions at
PAAM

Susan Bee: Eye of the Storm

Selected Works, 1981-2023

CURATED BY JOHANNA DRUCKER
ON VIEW AUGUST 23 – NOVEMBER 17, 2024
IN THE DUFFY GALLERY

This exhibit presents works from over four decades of Susan Bee's active career.

Her connection to Provincetown began as a child, when her artist parents, Sigmund and Miriam Laufer, were drawn to a community known for its vibrant arts community. Those memories show in her images of broad seascapes, symbolic lighthouses, sailboats, and isolated figures sitting on the shore to stare at a wide horizon. The paintings combine Bee's knowledge of art historical references with personal observation to provide a rich inventory of literal and metaphoric scenes.

The works are loosely grouped by eight themes: History, Children and Family, Self-Portraits, Feminist Pop Collage, Conflict and Drama, Metaphors, Scene-Scapes, and the Apocalypse. Throughout, Bee's vivid approach to paint, stylistic variety, and intense engagement with compositional dynamics and surface treatments are evident. But so are the many thoughtful reflections on popular culture, feminist struggles, the love of family, investigation of history, and dramatic conflicts. These paintings are also serious statements on the conditions of childhood, fears and dreams, as well as the possibilities of an apocalypse haunting our time.

The title "Eye of the Storm," taken from a 2007 painting, brings a thematic focus to the exhibit, with its image of calm in the midst of turbulence. But so does the much earlier canvas, *To the Lighthouse* (1981), which embodies the optimism of setting out on a long voyage of discovery. For Bee, art making has driven that optimism and painting has often provided the eye of calm in the storms of life. Joy and melancholy, possession and longing, are all facets of these colorful, sophisticated works brought together in a rare view into Bee's extensive corpus.

This exhibition is sponsored in part by Seamen's Bank.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Susan Bee is an artist living in Brooklyn, NY and summering in Provincetown, MA. She has had eight solo shows at A.I.R. Gallery, NY and solo shows in Southfirst Gallery and Accola Griefen Gallery in NY. She has a BA from Barnard College and an MA in Art from Hunter College. Bee has also had solo shows at the University of Pennsylvania, Kenyon College, Columbia University, William Paterson College, the New York Public Library, and Virginia Lust Gallery, and her work has been included in numerous group shows. Her work has been featured at AMP Gallery and Artstrand Gallery in Provincetown. Bee has published eighteen artist's books. She has collaborated with poets including: Susan Howe, Charles Bernstein, Johanna Drucker, and Jerome Rothenberg. Bee is the coeditor with Mira Schor of *M/E/A/N/I/N/G: An Anthology of Artist's Writings, Theory, and Criticism*, Duke University Press, 2000, and the coeditor of *M/E/A/N/I/N/G Online*. Her artist's book archive and the *M/E/A/N/I/N/G Archive* are at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Bee's artwork is in many public and private collections including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery at Reed College, Bibliotheque Nationale de France, Getty Museum, and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Bee's work has been reviewed in *Art in America*, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *ArtNews*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Artcritical*, *ArtSlant*, *The Forward*, *Huffington Post*, *Art Papers*, and *Hyperallergic*. She won a Guggenheim Fellowship in Fine Arts in 2014 and has had fellowships at the Mac-

dowell Colony, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and Yaddo. Bee has taught at the University of Pennsylvania, School of Visual Arts, and Pratt Institute.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

Johanna Drucker is Distinguished Professor and Breslauer Professor Emerita in the Department of Information Studies at UCLA. She is internationally known for her work in the history of graphic design, typography, experimental poetry, fine art, and digital humanities. Recent work includes *Inventing the Alphabet* (University of Chicago Press, 2022), *Visualization and Interpretation* (MIT Press, 2020), and *Iliazd: Meta-Biography of a Modernist* (Johns Hopkins University Press 2020), *Digital Humanities 101: An introduction to Digital Methods* (Routledge, 2021). Her artist's books are widely represented in museum and library collections and were the subject of a traveling retrospective, *Druckworks: 40 Years of Books and Projects*, in 2012–2014.

ARTWORK LIST

Artworks courtesy of the artist are for sale; please see the museum front desk for a price list and to purchase.

Ahava Berlin, 2012

Oil, enamel, and sand on canvas,
24 x 36

Courtesy of the artist

Apocalypse II, 2022

Oil and enamel on canvas, 24 x 30
Courtesy of the artist

Beware the Lady, 1999

Oil and collage on linen, 50 x 40
Courtesy of the artist

Dark Matter, 2017

Oil, enamel, and sand on linen, 36
x 48

Courtesy of the artist

Dark Pond, 2007

Oil and collage on linen, 37 x 50
Courtesy of the artist

Days of Awe, 2023

Oil on linen, 30 x 40
Courtesy of the artist

Demonology, 2018

Oil on linen, 30 x 24
Collection of Phong H. Bui

Doomed to Win, 1983

Oil on linen, 50 x 54
Courtesy of the artist

Eye of the Storm, 2007

Oil on linen, 48 x 51
Courtesy of the artist

Framing the Rosenbergs, 1983

Oil on linen, 28 x 32
Courtesy of the artist

Go Forth, 2011

Oil on linen, 20 x 16
Courtesy of the artist

Harbor of Illusion, 2017

Oil on linen, 24 x 30
Courtesy of the artist

Her Candle Burns Hot, 1999

Oil and collage on linen, 48 x 34
Courtesy of the artist

Late Echo, 2018

Oil, enamel, and sand on linen, 40
x 50

Courtesy of the artist

*Little Orphan Anagram, with poems
by Charles Bernstein, Granary
Books, 1997*

Letterpress and handpainted book,
8.5 x 11, 40 pp
Courtesy of the artist

Love is Gentle Whip, 1999

Oil and collage on linen, 36 x 48
Courtesy of the artist

*Marsden Hartley Meets Wonder
Woman, 1983*

Oil on linen, 30 x 20
Collection of Jon Friedman and
Joanne Barkan

Miss Dynamite, 2001

Oil and collage on linen, 50 x 34
Courtesy of the artist

Monster Mitt, 1990

Oil and collage on canvas, 16 x 20
Courtesy of the artist

Pickpocket, 2013

Oil on canvas, 20 x 24
Courtesy of the artist

*Portrait of the Artist as a Young Pig,
1983*

Oil on linen, 50 x 60
Courtesy of the artist

Pow!, 2014

Oil, enamel, and sand on canvas,
30 x 24
Courtesy of the artist

Roots and Branches, 2004

Oil and collage on linen, 54 x 50
Courtesy of the artist

Spider's Web, 1990

Oil and collage on linen, 16 x 20
Courtesy of the artist

Stormy Weather, 1990

Oil and collage on linen, 18 x 24
Courtesy of the artist

Swan Song, 1989

Oil and mixed media on linen, 16
x 20
Courtesy of the artist

Talespin, Granary Books, 1995

Offset and handpainted book, 8.5 x
11, 44 pp
Courtesy of the artist

*The Burning Babe & Other Poems,
with poems by Jerome Rothenberg,
Granary Books, 2005*

Digital printing, book, 9 x 12, 36 pp
Courtesy of the artist

The Flood, 1983-2006

Oil and collage on linen, 52 x 68
Courtesy of the artist

The Slap, 2012

Oil and enamel on canvas, 24 x 20
Courtesy of the artist

To the Lighthouse I, 1981

Oil on linen, 50 x 40
Courtesy of the artist

Tree of Lost Dreams, 2004

Oil and collage on linen, 40 x 50
Courtesy of the artist

Treehouse, 2022

Oil, enamel, and sand on linen, 48
x 40
Courtesy of the artist

Wanderer in a Sea of Fog, 2008

Oil on linen, 18 x 14
Collection of Susan Straub

Windswept, 2020

Archival paper with collage, ink,
gouache, watercolor, crayon,
markers, acrylic, and colored pencil,
86 x 6.125 (6.25 x 4.25 x 1, folded)
Courtesy of the artist