

Korn Gallery
Dorothy Young Center for the Arts
Drew University
Madison, NJ 07940

For Immediate Release

Sylvie Harris *Labor*



Sylvie Harris, *Baranek*, 2022, inkjet print, 24 x 36"

Exhibition: March 16 – April 14, 2023
Artist Talk: March 31 12:30 PM, ARTS 102
Reception: March 31 5 – 6:30 PM

Free Admission

The Korn Gallery is pleased to announce the exhibition, *Labor*, by artist and alumna Sylvie Harris (CLA '15), on view March 17 through April 14, 2023. The Gallery is located in the Dorothy Young Center for the Arts at Drew University and is open Wednesday through Saturday 12:00-4pm, and by appointment. The exhibition, organized by Rory Mulligan, explores a range of photographic media including traditional digital capture and printing, archival family photographs, and photographs printed on fabrics including silk and cotton.

About the artist:

Sylvie Harris's work celebrates domesticity while also addressing the challenges of societal expectations within the patriarchy. Harris graduated in 2022 with an MFA in Photography from Columbia College Chicago and received her BA in Studio Art and Art History from Drew University in 2015. She was also a Curatorial Assistant at the Museum of Contemporary Photography and the recipient of the 2021 Stuart Abelson Graduate Research Fellowship in Krakow, Poland. Recent solo exhibitions of her work have shown at

Swartley Gallery in Englewood, NJ and The Arcade in Chicago, IL. She lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

About the exhibition:

This exhibition includes work from various projects by Harris including *Domestic Lineage*, *The Ancestry of Home* and *As Opposed to Transience*. The evolution of Harris' process reflects an ever-increasing investment in exploring the tactile and protracted nature of domestic craft and work. At the core of these intersecting projects and approaches lies a universal question: how do I embrace tradition while staking my claim as an active participant in today's contemporary and more progressive world? More specifically for Harris: how do I embrace domestic expectations that sequester women to the home while living as a feminist whose own beliefs disavow staid and repressive gender roles?

Photography often enacts senses other than sight: smell, taste, touch, sound. This is especially true in Harris' straight photographs taken in her great-grandparent's home in Springfield, Massachusetts. Immigrants from Poland, her Babcia and Dziadziu's house becomes a stage for traditional fabrics, foods and customs. There is familiarity and mystery to outside viewers of these images: the family table set for a holiday feast, rife with food immediately conjures any number of comforting smells, tastes and sounds for a viewer. Meanwhile, the tight framing of hands picking at the roots of a plant feels strange and primordial—the plant more akin to the mythic mandrake root rather than an ordinary house plant. Tradition is at once comforting and unsettling in these images.

The activity of hands, specifically hands belonging to the women of the household, are further emphasized and made expressive through Harris' fabric pieces. These pieces include fabrics used in Polish folk costuming as a substrate for Harris' photographs which are sewn into them. This literal interweaving of the old and the new is the crux of her work: combining inherited elements and more modern, personal expression to create something entirely new. The weight of tradition and domestic labor that historically falls squarely on the unpaid labor of women is both celebrated and transformed in these textile installations. These textile installations become denatured domestic objects underlining the inherent intergenerational tension at play in Harris' work.

There is no simple rejection or embrace of tradition in Harris' work. This nuance reflects how many of us navigate our own place in the world as people tethered to established histories while also building toward different futures.

The artist will give a talk on March 31 at 12:45 PM in ARTS 102; there will be a reception that same evening from 5 – 6:30.

For more information please email Visual Arts Coordinator Jason Karolak at jkrolak@drew.edu
Korn Gallery, Drew University, 36 Madison Avenue, Madison, NJ 07940
www.drew.edu/korngallery

