

Press Release  
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- *The Infinite Image*

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Mesopotamian cylinder seal impressions  
From July 3, 2018

- The Infinite Image is an exhibition that brings together five impressions made from Mesopotamian cylinder seals (c.3000- c.300 BCE) with five contemporary painters who use diverse strategies to resuscitate, reactivate, and recombine art-historical images & motifs. Employing sources from the late Palaeolithic, to Mesoamerica to the Renaissance and proto-Modernism, the art-historical image is cajoled from the vertical, rectilinear, historical plane to the circular, social, phenomenological.

The exhibition takes its title from a book by Zainab Bahrani (Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Art & Archaeology at Columbia University NY) that proposes a new reading of Mesopotamian Art. The text demonstrates how Mesopotamia was 'home to an aesthetic realm defined by objects that transcend time in order to carry traces of the past into the present'. The Mesopotamians themselves interacted with direct sources of earlier era objects that the ancients, their predecessors, had placed in the earth according to their own archaeological connection with the past. They conceived the image as a form of infinite presence, both historically specific and timeless.

For the exhibition five new Mesopotamian cylinder seal impressions have been produced in collaboration with Zainab Bahrani and Sidney Babcock (curator of seals and tablets at the Morgan Library). Installed side by side the exhibition draws a parallel between the logic of the Ancient Mesopotamian image and specific approaches to contemporary painting, that raises questions of the status of the art-historical image as it undergoes shifts in origin, distribution, function and mission.

Opening July 3 from 4-7pm.

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