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MARY BETH EDELSON

BURN IN HELL

NOV 17 – DEC 23

Balice Hertling is pleased to present *Burn in Hell*, Mary Beth Edelson's first solo exhibition with the gallery, and her first ever solo exhibition in France.

A celebrated figure in the development of feminist art in America in the 1970s, Mary Beth Edelson has for decades combined political activism with an expansive and incisive investigation of female myths and archetypes.

On June 23, 1993, Lorena Bobbitt was raped by her husband John Wayne Bobbitt. Later that night she cut off his penis with a carving knife.

Burn in Hell adds Lorena Bobbitt to Edelson's pantheon of powerful woman.

The exhibition centers around Edelson's book, "The Last Temptation of Lorena Bobbitt." On the gallery walls are watercolors, drawings, and silkscreens, each one further developing the potential of the Bobbitt myth.

Throughout, the artist transforms Bobbitt into a series of hybrid goddesses and legends. Some examples: She becomes the mother of Christ, holding her castrated son as in a Renaissance Pieta. Frequently she is Kali-Bobbitt, many-armed destroyer of worlds, belted with knives and skulls. Sometimes her face splits in two and she becomes a diabolical pair of twins. In some instances the beautiful, penis-removing Lorena plays the role of the beautiful, head-removing Salome.

The transformation of the real-world Bobbitt into a trans-historical archetype is typical of the artist's lifelong search for representations of women, while at the same time remaining skeptical about the redemptive aspects of mythology, instead imagining such poetic procedures that fuel action in the present.

Mary Beth Edelson (b.1933, East Chicago, IN, USA) has lived in New York since the 1970s. Active in the civil rights movement, she was a founder of the Heresies collective and journal as well as an early member of A.I.R. Gallery. She is a key figure in the development of feminist art in the United States and has shown her paintings, collages, installations, and photographs worldwide.