

FRANK TALKS

# Sibylle Peretti – Visual Artist

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Born in Mulheim an der Ruhr, Germany in 1964, Sibylle Peretti first studied glassmaking & design at the State School of Glass in Zwiesel and continued her education at the Academy of Fine Arts in Cologne, Germany, where she received her MFA in Sculpture and Painting in 1993.

Peretti has won numerous awards and endorsements, including grants from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation and the Joan Mitchell Foundation, as well as the 2013 United States Artist Fellowship. In 2018, her work was featured in a solo exhibition *Promise and Perception: The Enchanted Landscapes of Sibylle Peretti*, at the Chrysler Museum of Art.

Peretti's work is included in the permanent collections of the Toledo Museum of Art, (Toledo, OH), the New Orleans Museum of Art (New Orleans, LA), Corning Museum of Glass (Corning, NY), Carnegie Museum of Art (Pittsburgh, PA), Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (Canada), Museum of Applied Arts (Frankfurt, Germany), the Barry Art Museum (Norfolk, VA), Hunter Museum (Chattanooga TN), Speed Museum (Louisville, KY), 21c Museum (Louisville, KY) and was most recently acquired by the Huntsville Museum of Art.

Don't miss Peretti's current exhibition *Untamed* at Heller Gallery.

**What was the most important thing you learned at your first job in the Arts?**

I have been a self-employed visual artist since I was 26. I studied sculpture and painting at the Arts Academy in Cologne. During this time I founded with other students the Artist Collective "Ehrenfelder" We operated an exhibition space and organized theme-based shows. Working within an art community taught me being open minded to different ideas and concepts. I also learned how important it is to get the support of others and being in a pool of like-minded people was comforting and encouraging.

**Where are you from and what is the arts community like there? How has your upbringing shaped what you do in the arts today?**

I grew up in Muelheim, one of many cities in the Ruhr Valley. It's the densest industrial area of Germany known for its coal mining and steel fabrication. Most Germans think of it as a heavy, depressing landscape, but beside that I believe that it made me sensitive to/focus on the beautiful things that are often overseen but were hiding in steel pipes and tucked away between coal heaps. Today my work still focuses on the perception of hidden beauty.

I moved to Cologne in 1985 when the Art Community was very vibrant and lively. The Junge Wilde where in their high peak and it was common to hop all night from one studio to the next to discuss their newest paintings.

**What have been the greatest accomplishments and challenges in your career thus far?**

Surviving as an artist without making too many compromises.

### **Tell us more about your mixed media approach?**

Until I was 19 I studied at a Glass School in Bavaria teaching everything about glass fabrication and design, but I always wanted to push the material further and give it a personal voice. That's when I started to study painting and sculpture at the Arts Academy in Cologne. I explored different materials and was layering translucent papers combined with drawings onto sheets of found glass. It added a new dimension and it made so much sense to combine glass with my imagery on paper. In my glass panels today I combine altered and manipulated photographic prints and drawings on paper with slumped glass. this process allows me to build a 3-dimensionality I would not be able to achieve with any other materials.

My sculptural work is pure cast glass. Glass is full of flexibility and its fragility and strength makes it to an irreplaceable metaphor for life.

### **Much of your work deals with transitional zones of space between rural and urban areas as a sanctuary for animals and humans. What drew you to this topic?**

My upbringing in an industrial wasteland where these terrains become playgrounds for children.

They are the areas where encroaching civilization meets the wilderness, one of the front lines in the struggle for a better ecological and environmental balance. I see them as a refuge for humans but also animals, like a launching spot, where you can journey into an undefined place of possibilities and where you may find moments of clarity, solitude, and introspection. And for the animals they are simply momentary sanctuaries, necessary for survival.

### **What is the best piece of advice you can give about working in the art world?**

As an artist in the art world it is important to find longer times of solitude. Its necessary for self- contemplation and to gain insight. Be true to yourself. Don't try to be someone else.

### **What are you most excited for this year in the art world as a whole?**

As we emerge from the isolation of the Covid pandemic, the potential of rearranged paradigms of artistic expressions will become more evident. As we reconnect to other artists and new theoretical structures, the possibilities of unknown creative solutions should bring an extremely exciting new world of art in the new world.

**How do you think the art world can become more transparent?**

For me, the process of art and art making is inherently transparent. For the art world as a whole, the prospect of exploring diversity in institutions promoting art and art making allows a greater and more open and inclusive visual dialogue.

**What is the best exhibition you have seen recently?**

Dawn Dedeaux: "The Space Between Worlds" at NOMA

**If you could own work by 5 different artists, who would be in your collection?**

Peter Hugo

Eva Hesse

Lucian Freud

Oskar Kokoschka

Paloma Varga Weisz