

GALLERY **WENDI
NORRIS**

WRESTLING GOD
Dana Harel
September 6 – October 27, 2012



Wrestling God (detail)
graphite and soil on paper, 72 x 92 in. (183 x 234 cm), 2012
Cover Image

Wrestling God

Wrestling God deepens Harel's exploration of the human capacity for physical, psychological, and spiritual transformation with a set of meticulously rendered, larger-than-life portraits and action scenes of wrestlers and combatants, as well as an experimental video and sound performance to take place at the opening. True to form, her new drawings are all elegant, expertly constructed depictions, technically on par with contemporaries Aurel Schmidt or Colter Jacobsen, and her sensitive renderings capture the gore of a vanquished foe's organs as well as the ambiguous glow of halos and arena lights. The exhibition as a whole opens up a line of allegorical questioning into the human capacity for transformation, and the struggle change can entail.

These works are inspired by the Biblical tale of Jacob wrestling with an Angel from the Book of Genesis, a brief, enigmatic passage that describes human Jacob's confrontation with a mysterious, divine figure that lasted all night, and concluded with Jacob's physical defeat, but also him being blessed with the name of Israel. Harel relates this to the struggle between the enlightened and the debased aspects of all of our lives. Her works therefore show each subject as oppositional extremes united in one physical form, and so good and evil, corporeal and ephemeral, light and dark, are readily apparent in her dramatic chiaroscuro drawings. She shows her subjects both locked in battle, bodies clashing, as well as deep in thought, isolated and physically still.

Harel's struggle and dedication are evident in her naturalistic renderings and deep spatial passages, her own devotion mirroring the penitent gestures and heroic efforts of her subjects. Rainer Maria Rilke wrote about Jacob and the angel in his poem *The Man Watching*, linking physical punishment, spiritual ambitions, and human growth thusly:

*Whoever was beaten by this Angel
(who often simply declined the fight)
went away proud and strengthened
and great from that harsh hand,
that kneaded him as if to change his shape.
Winning does not tempt that man.
This is how he grows: by being defeated, decisively,
by constantly greater beings.*

Harel's new depictions, of boxers, wrestlers, and striking male nudes, glory in the drama of physical struggle. Like her earlier works, these images also contemplate the metaphysics of the total human experience.



02

there was a time when the enemy used to look you in the eyes
graphite and soil on paper, 56 x 72 in. (143 x 183 cm), 2012



03

I've wrestled with alligators
graphite and soil on paper, 92 x 72 in. (234 x 183 cm), 2012



04

Bare Knuckle Fighters IV
mixed media on paper, 21 x 17 in. (53 x 43 cm), 2012



05

Bare Knuckle Fighters II
mixed media on paper, 19 x 24 in. (48.5 x 61 cm), 2012

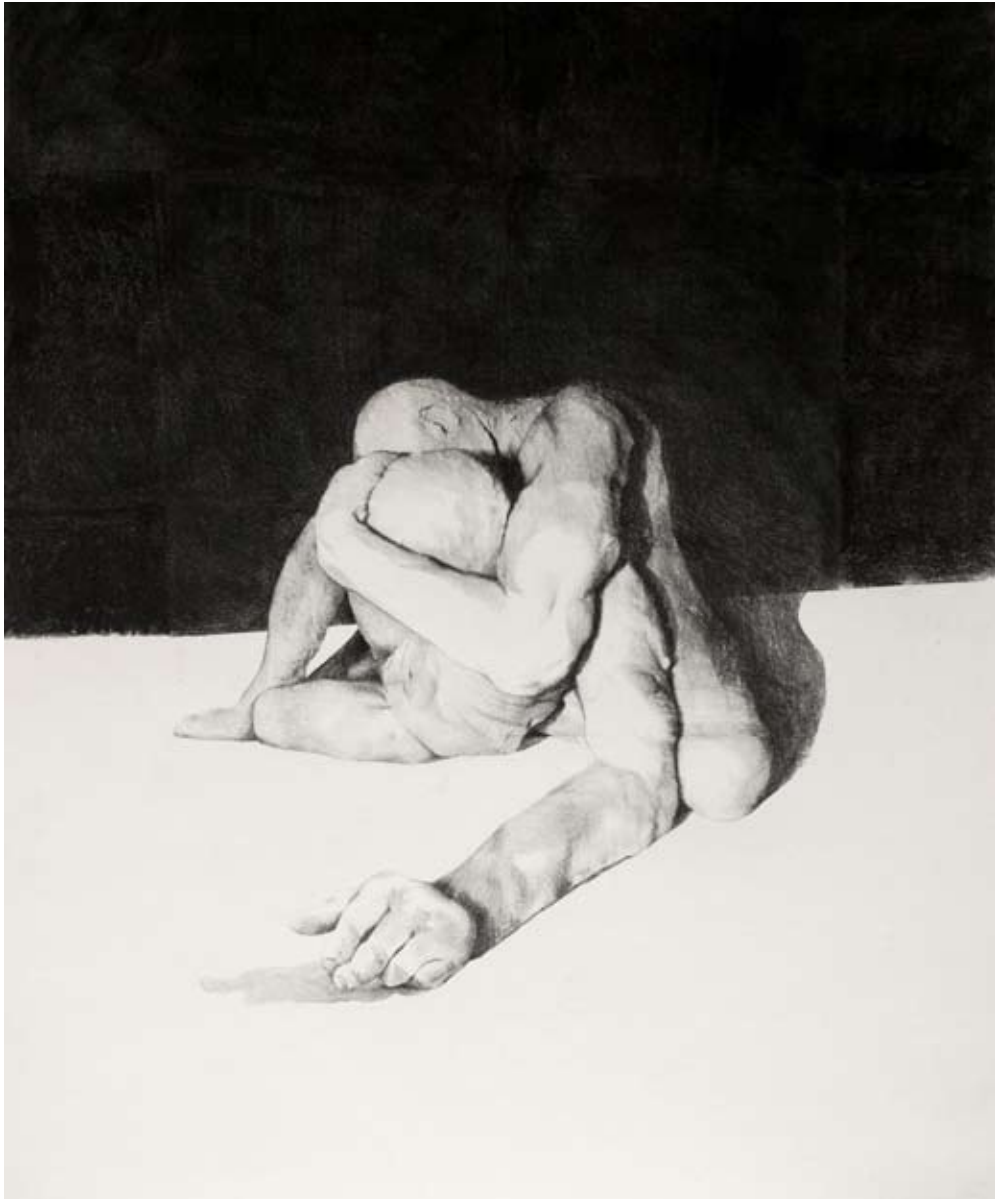


06

Wrestling God

color digital video, Edition of 5, 5:13 minutes, 2012

Luciano Chessa- composer and performer, Fred Kolouch- editor and videographer



07

Bare Knuckle Fighters III
mixed media on paper, 29 x 24 in. (74 x 61 cm), 2012



08

Bare Knuckle Fighters V
mixed media on paper, 28 x 21 in. (71 x 53 cm), 2012



Wrestling God
graphite and soil on paper, 72 x 92 in. (183 x 234 cm), 2012



Wrestling God (detail)
graphite and soil on paper, 72 x 92 in. (183 x 234 cm), 2012



09

I've tussled with a whale
graphite and soil on paper, 92 x 72 in. (234 x 183 cm), 2012



10

Bare Knuckle Fighters I
mixed media on paper, 16 x 24 in. (40 x 61 cm), 2012

Curriculum Vitae

DANA HAREL

EDUCATION

2000, Bachelor of Architecture with honors, California College of Arts and Crafts, School of Architecture, San Francisco, California

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2014

Solo exhibition, Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA

2012

Wrestling God, Gallery Wendi Norris, San Francisco, CA

2010

Manimal, Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, Herzliya, Israel

2009

Kin, Frey Norris Gallery, San Francisco, CA

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2011

De-Bombed, Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA

Pangea: Art at the Forefront of Cultural Convergence, Frey Norris Contemporary & Modern, San Francisco, CA

A Live Animal, Root Division, San Francisco, CA

Size Matters, San Jose Contemporary Art Institute, San Jose, CA

2010

Human Nature, Montalvo Center for the Arts, Saratoga, CA

Secret Drawings, Palo Alto Art Center, Palo Alto, CA

Monster Drawing Rally- SOUTHERN EXPOSURE GALLERY, San Francisco, CA

Figure and Faces, Pacific Art League, Palo Alto, CA

2009

Echo: Eight San Francisco Artists Respond to Surrealist Masterworks, Frey Norris Gallery,

San Francisco, CA

Herstory, Napa Valley Museum, Yountville, CA

Permutations from Natures Perimeter, Palo Alto Art Center, Palo Alto, CA

Contemporary Drawings, Elder Gallery, Nebraska Wesleyan University, NE

Monster Drawing Rally- SOUTHERN EXPOSURE GALLERY, San Francisco, CA

2006

Emerge, Gen Art San Francisco, CA
Curated by Daniell Cornell, Jim Dawsey, Meg Shiffler

GRANTS AND AWARDS

2009

IRVINE FELLOWSHIP recipient at the Montalvo Arts Center Residency Program, Saratoga, CA

2006

GEN ART- *Emerge*, San Francisco, CA

THEATER COLLABORATION

2012

The Conference of the Birds Unfeathered- Mondavi Art Center, Davis, CA and Montalvo Center for the Arts, Saratoga, CA

PRESS

Bay Area Reporter - review, 'Wrestling God', 2012

Beautiful Decay- Featured work, 'Future Perfect' issue, 2011

ZYZZYVA- Featured work, Fall issue, 2011
NY Times- "Side by side, a bold opening for Frey Norris", 2011

Art Daily- Review on 'Size Matter'
Nature Magazine- Feature on 'Size Matter'
Midnight East, review on 'Manimal', 2010
Yediot Hsharon, review on 'Manimal', 2010

Mercury New, review on 'Human Nature', 2010

ArtNews, review on 'Echo' December 2009

Artshift San Jose, review on 'Permutations from Natures Perimeter' July 2009

Artweek, review on 'Herstory' June 2009
San Francisco Bay Guardian, review on 'Kin', April 2009

SF Weekly, review on 'Kin', April 2009

Artslant, review on 'Kin', April 2009

Inside City Limits, TV interview on 'Kin', April 2009

CATALOGUES AND PUBLICATIONS

2012

Eleven Eleven Journal- issue #13

2011

Beautiful Decay Magazine- Future Perfect, book 6

ZYZZYVA Magazine- 2011 Fall issue

2009

Kin, 20 page catalog with essay by Paul Woolford, a Senior Vice President and a Director of Design for the architecture firm of Hellmuth, Obata + Kassabaum, published by Frey Norris Gallery.



Dana Harel in her studio, 2012.
Photo by Ronit Citri.