

Press release Madrid May 2024

## "CHAOS THEORY"

The New York based artist Ellen Frances opens her first solo exhibition in Europe at Tönnheim Gallery in Madrid, Spain. Vernissage is open for all and everyone on Saturday first of June at 12.00h-19.00. The artist will be present at the opening and will be doing three shorter performance acts during the opening day 1 of June, at the following hours; 12.00, 14.30h and the last one at 18.00h.

Hidden Geometry: Growing up in a Roman Catholic household, the mysterious iconography and symbolism of religious artwork has resonated with Ellen Frances deeply from the onset of her earliest memory. Ellens fascination with the symbolic lexicon extended to the illustrative work of fraternal orders such as Freemasonry; embraced by her favorite luminaries like Newton and Mozart. It was not until more recently, however, that the nexus between her interest in mystical subject matter and the comprehension of mathematical breakdown came into focus with discernible clarity.



- My work as an artist is rooted in a search for alchemical clarity via the study and practice of unlimited self-expression. I utilize a combined practice of automatic writing, sketching, painting, and pull inspiration from my history as a performer in the theater. Stylistically, my work is inspired by classicism and surrealism. The tactile, handmade approach I take when creating each of my pieces is a commentary on the beautiful history of the human spirit's presence in craft. It is also a defiant rebellion against the present-day generative evolution, which seeks to suppress our innate ability to imagine and create freely by an increasingly algorithmic, flattened, artificial world, says Ellen Frances.

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*In the summer of 2021 I rented a room, by chance, in the 18th c. home of a Taiwanese artist and ancient geometry scholar. It was there, along the Hudson River, beside a 25 acre friary of The Capuchin Order, that I witnessed a quiet dedication to the study of sacred geometry's presence in art and nature. Upon my return to New York City that fall, I began to study patterns in music, movement and painting. I discovered Dali's obsession with "Nuclear Mysticism", post WWII.*

*This period saw Dali return to his Roman Catholic roots via the geometric harmonies of religious iconography. His work of this era drew a direct visual correlation to the mathematical and scientific underpinnings of Einstein's atomic theory – Thus concluding that the atom, as the basic building block of matter, held spiritual significance which could be visualized precisely via geometry. – Further readings included an examination of W.B. Yeats's affiliation with the secret society; The Hermetic Order of The Golden Dawn. In seminal hermetic-inspired works such as "A Vision," (1925) Yeats employs geometric diagrams as conduits for spiritual revelation. Additionally, writings and illustrations authored by Newton and DaVinci (among others) served as vehicles of understanding for a complex mathematical world. It is a world which I am academically unqualified to decipher, but am enthralled by from a mystical and theoretical perspective.*

*My interests in scientific visual and spiritual harmony, supported by the theory of the divine in sacred geometry, fuels much of my inquisition into higher modes of cogitation. Yet, in juxtaposition, I find profound aesthetic merit in the deliberate deconstruction of harmonious compositions. A poignant illustration of this is exemplified by the famous comparative analysis of Picasso's "Study for Guitar Sculpture" (1924) and Albrecht Dürer's "Sacred Geometry" (1528). While both are centered on the motif of the guitar, these works display disparate, albeit equally resonant, aesthetic frequencies— Picasso's deconstruction of form portrays a visual and theoretical chaotic fragmentation akin to the division of particles. Birthed from Chaos: I have traced all mystical and spiritual uses for sacred geometric iconography back to ancient civilization when seeking to understand various realms of existence. Records reveal all mystical icons and human awareness of sacred geometry are derived from Egyptology and the dawn of man.*

*Nature's "divine" engineering proves existence is, fundamentally, harmonious formation. However, when going back further in time beyond "birth", to pre-existence, it seems inevitable we would discover harmony's deconstructed state. We would find such symmetrical harmony is born from chaos. Chaos theory reveals that even within the visible randomness of complex, chaotic systems, there are inherent repetitions, patterns, and anticipated interconnectedness on the verge of powerful formation. This begs the question; is divinity geometric harmony, or is divinity the chaos from which harmony is born?*

*– It is the all.*

*Ellen Frances*

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**Ellen Frances** is an American multidisciplinary artist based on Manhattan in New York City. Her practice merges painting, poetry, movement, photography, sound and design. She has shown at Mana Contemporary (NJ), The Hole Gallery (NY), Volta Art Fair (NY), Anthology Film Archives (NY), Thoor Ballylee (IE), Java Project (BK), and Tönnheim Gallery (NY / ESP). Her work has appeared in the New York Times, the Brooklyn Rail, and Art Observed -- as well as WideWalls, CultBytes and WhiteHot Magazines. – She is a self-taught painter working primarily in oil and watercolor. Her paintings are derived from daily journal entries as contemplation and are frequently paired with hand written poems. – Her performance art is inspired by ancient Greco-Roman pantomime and 19th c. Ballet d'Action. Each performance incorporates original hand-sewn costumes, choreography, poetry, painted backdrops, masks and original sound compositions. Her live presentations gained attention in the winter of 2023 after Ellen appeared monthly in underground NY salons curated by Beckett Rosset; the namesake of Samuel Beckett, and son of Barney Rosset. In the summer of 2023, Ellen was the first-ever artist in residence at the 16th c. Normandy tower home of Irish author, poet and playwright W.B. Yeats during the centenary of his Nobel Prize win. Ellen appeared in fashion campaigns for the designer Samantha Pleet in early 2024. As an author, she is represented by the Shipman Agency. Her book of written essays, drawings, paintings, and textile work; is expected to be released in 2026.

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Calle Miguel Mayor 1, Carabanchel (28019 Madrid) and the gallery is open Tuesday - Friday at 11.00-14.00 & 16.30-19.30 and Saturdays 11.00-19.00, or by appointment.

*Tönnheim Gallery's mission is to examine the idea of the painterly, be it also through related media such as photography, sculpture, installations, video and drawing, in order to understand and to promote the direction of painting and its relevance to contemporary visual culture.*

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