

TIMES *Ledger*

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Banquet of the Beheaded Brings Historical Characters to Life in Long Island City

By Tammy Scileppi — September 23, 2017



Courtesy of Nicola L.

If you were invited to a dinner party for talking heads, would you go?

While you ponder that question, consider how much fun it would be ... and quite educational, as well.

The Banquet of the Beheaded at Long Island City's **SculptureCenter** is a collection of monologues delivered at a dinner party for decapitated historical figures. At this "meeting of the minds" you would observe 12 headless characters describe the circumstances of their iconic deaths, aiming to correct the historical record and reassess the relevance of their fates.

This surreal tableau will take place Tuesday, Sept. 26, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

New York City conceptual artist Nicola L.'s imaginative work brings 12 real and fictional characters of varying fame to her unusual banquet table: Marie Antoinette; Anne Boleyn; Maximilien de Robespierre; Princess Misha'al bint Fahd; Holofernes; Goliath; Medusa; John the Baptist; Eugen Weidmann; Henri Désiré Landru; Charlotte Corday; and Jayne Mansfield.

On the occasion of "**Nicola L.: Works, 1968 to the Present**," the SculptureCenter will present a staged reading of *The Banquet of the Beheaded*, a performance work by Nicola L., originally mounted at La MaMa E.T.C. in New York in January 1999.

“While Banquet of the Beheaded was originally performed in a theatrical setting, the reading at SculptureCenter links her interest in the head as a site and performance with the rest of her works, which also evoke these considerations,” said curator **Ruba Katrib**.

The exhibition at SculptureCenter, on view Sept. 18 through Dec. 18, is the artist’s first institutional survey, including works from her wide-reaching creative legacy, showing her “functional art” alongside her paintings and collages, as well as video.

“While we aren’t re-enacting Nicola L.’s play ‘Banquet of the Beheaded,’ the reading of the parts within the exhibition space brings her performance work in contact with her other artworks. For this exhibition, Nicola’s first survey, I think it is very important to find ways to connect the various aspects of her practice,” Katrib said.

Since the artist’s conjured up creative concepts are so avant-garde, it seems apropos that SculptureCenter, an arts institution dedicated to experimental and innovative developments in contemporary sculpture, should host Nicola L.’s creations.

Since the 1960s, the French-born New Yorker has occupied a unique position through her interdisciplinary practice. She creates works that are thematically connected, but take on many different forms and formats, from performance to film to domestic objects.

Since the reading is sold out, please email: info@sculpture-center.org to be added to the waitlist.

Doors open at 6 p.m. 718-361-1750