

# frieze

Artist's Artists: Part Three

In *Frieze Masters*

19 October 2020



Ida Applebroog, *Marginalia (trio)*, 1995, oil and resin gel on canvas, 3 panels, installation size variable.  
Courtesy: © Ida Applebroog and Hauser & Wirth;  
photograph: Emily Poole

## Mira Schor nominates Ida Applebroog's *Marginalia (Trio)* (1995)

Ida Applebroog once caught me in the act of feeling up one of her paintings while she had stepped out of the room. 'How like a painter,' she said (or something to that effect), a seeming contradiction that I understood perfectly; how like a painter to grasp the sculptural nature of painting. Its illusionism or its flatness is only one aspect of the medium: the tactile and the sculptural is as important as the representational.

We meet Applebroog's life-sized triptych, *Marginalia (Trio)* (1995), face to face. Or, rather, it meets us and stops us in our tracks. On each panel is a life-sized figure – two boys in their underwear and on the left an older woman, slightly taller yet somehow slighter, lifting her left leg and pouring out a thin stream. Each of the three figures is created from thick palette knife slabs of deep crimson oil and resin gel paint, such that the liquid emanating from under her skirt is indeterminate in nature – everything here is blood red.

This bleeding/peeing older figure is a thunderbolt in the history of women's representation, in part because the passionate intensity of the colour and texture is contradicted by her non-committal expression. She is doing something seemingly abject, but there is no exhibitionism nor bravado – she simply is doing it, right in front of us, in our space. These paintings are not windows into a world: because they are free-standing on the floor we also stand on, they are like full-length mirrors, so that we are the people in the painting. I, the female viewer, am the bleeding/peeing figure I'm looking at.

Twenty years after I first saw this work, I painted the older woman artist still leaking blood, despite having a death's head, but I had so thoroughly internalized the impact of and the permission given by Applebroog's work that I temporarily forgot it was her image, redux.

*Mira Schor is an artist and writer based in New York, USA. Her show 'HERE/THEN, THERE/NOW' is on view at Fabian Lang Gallery, Zurich, Switzerland, until 14 November.*