

TIBOR DE NAGY

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Shari Mendelson

Chasing the Deer

September 8 to October 14, 2023

Opening, Friday, September 8, 6-8pm



Shari Mendelson *Chasing the Deer*, 2022 repurposed plastic and mixed media

Tibor de Nagy is pleased to present Shari Mendelson – *Chasing the Deer*. This is the artist's second exhibition with the gallery.

The exhibition is comprised of 12 sculptures made using the artist's unique process of repurposing ordinary plastic beverage bottles. Working in this way for the past decade and a half, Mendelson has devised and perfected a way of creating distinct forms out of mass-produced plastic. The process allows the look of the plastic to be transformed and appear like ancient glass, stone, or ceramic, while never quite completely obscuring the original contemporary, ubiquitous material.

Mendelson draws from a broad swath of art history for her subject matter. She has spent countless hours scouring museums looking at ancient glass and terra cotta vessel, human, and animal forms from Roman, Cypriot, Egyptian, Chinese, and Islamic traditions. Her

pieces often start with a specific object as a source of inspiration, but as they develop, they take on a life of their own. For example, the work *Chasing the Deer* (pictured above) is based on a very small Mesopotamian cylinder seal (1300-1200 BC) which Mendelson reimagines as a much larger dynamic three-dimensional sculpture. The title of this piece refers to Arvo Pärt's interpretation of Robert Burns' poem, *My Heart's in the Highlands*, a song of longing for the mountainous countryside.



Shari Mendelson *Ram Bearer* 2023 repurposed plastic and mixed media

The current exhibition takes special interest in the interaction between human and animal figures and the formal liberties that can be licensed by that interaction. Animals have an important role in mythology and ancient art. They are sometimes portrayed as a vehicle from the natural world to the divine and often appear as amalgams of human and animal. Mendelson uses the mythology as a basis to formally riff on the ancient sources.

The artist has a studio in upstate New York where she is surrounded by the hills of the northern Catskill. In a recent interview with curator Heather Moqtaderi, Mendelson reflected on the timelessness and universality of certain imagery between the present day and the ancient world. Discussing her sculpture *Ram Bearer* (pictured above), which is based on a Cypriot Limestone piece (second quarter of the 6th century BCE), she shared the following anecdote: "I was working on *Ram Bearer*, when I saw an image on Instagram of a friend rescuing a goat by carrying it on his shoulders through a flooded field. He looked just like a modern-day Ram Bearer."

Shari Mendelson (b. 1961) is based in Brooklyn and Upstate New York. Her work has been shown nationally and internationally including the recent group exhibitions at the Renwick Gallery at the Smithsonian in Washington D.C. and in *Unrequited Love* curated

by Sarah Peters and Vera Iliatova at Nathalie Karg Gallery. Upcoming exhibitions include a solo exhibition at Fahrenheit Madrid Gallery in Spain and a two person exhibition at Eckert Art Gallery at Millerston University. The artist has received four New York Foundation for the Arts fellowships, and is a 2017 Guggenheim Fellowship recipient. Mendelson received her MFA from SUNY New Paltz in 1986.