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ANNA-WILI HIGHFIELD

SPIRIT FACES

Opening Reception:
February 9, 6–8pm

Exhibition:
February 6 – March 6, 2018

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Olsen Gruin is pleased to present *Spirit Faces*, an installational exhibition of new sculptures by Australian artist Anna-Wili Highfield, on view from February 6 to March 6, 2018, at 30 Orchard Street. Highfield's first fully conceived body of work in a decade, *Spirit Faces* gathers a celebratory mélange of animals, body parts, and self-portraits. Virtuoso and playful, Highfield's mixed media sculptures reach new heights of exuberance and material imagination.

Highfield rejoices in the rough treatment of luxury objects. Constructing forms rather than using molds, Highfield combines cut brass with natural materials, including freshwater pearls, shell, feathers, onyx, and coral, and with fabrics like velvet, linen, and felt. Spray painted, her glamorous sculptures appear dirty and sharp, and elicit a desire to touch. Such a sense of urge persists throughout the work explicitly, as in *Transmission* and *Reception*, two gleeful representations of ejaculation, and implicitly, in the animal instincts evoked.

Nonetheless Highfield's sculptures are aesthetically refined, longing and empathetic. The works seek solace in the affinities we share with animals. Bursting with this natural spirit, each piece manifests the intuitive elegance of her making. For Highfield, the animal sculptures are more than totemic friends or talismans; they bear her identity. In the works of *Spirit Faces*, Highfield entwines universal resonance and personal feeling, raucous materiality and gentle sensitivity.

Anna-Wili Highfield (b. 1980, Sydney) lives and works in Sydney. She studied painting at the National Art School, Sydney, and worked as a scenic artist for Opera Australia before forging an independent art practice working by private commission for over 10 years. Large scale installational projects include *Animals*, *Carriageworks*, *Australia*, and several works for *Hermes Australia*. This is Anna-Wili Highfield's first commercial gallery exhibition.

For further information please contact the gallery at info@olsengruin.com or at [+1.646.525.6213](tel:+16465256213). All images are subject to copyright. Gallery approval must be granted prior to reproduction.