Nancy Grossman
November 3 – December 8, 2012

Marc Selwyn Fine Art is pleased to announce the first solo exhibition of work by Nancy Grossman to take place in Los Angeles. The show will feature over 25 drawings, collages and sculptures dating from the 1960s to the mid-1990s.

Grossman first exhibited her leather-bound sculpture heads in 1969. She quickly became known for these black leather personas that felt uncannily lifelike. Building from the inside out, Grossman starts by carving, sanding and polishing a found chunk of wood. She then wraps them in leather, drives nails into the wood, casts noses in rubber or porcelain and rubs paint into the soft surface. This meticulous process can be read as an attempt to comprehend her tumultuous childhood and to cope with the alienation of being *the other.* The leather functions as a second skin grown to conceal the subject's inner-life and protect it from the violence of the outside world. Rather than seeming decapitated, her sculptures represent the whole body and person. They stare you down from across the room and symbolize the otherness in all of us.

In addition to her sculptural works, the exhibition contains a wide range of drawings and collages. Grossman's skillful draftsmanship depicts the human condition and expresses the artist's personal sense of alienation. Bound and restrained men represent emblems of physical strength who become powerless individuals in a repressed society. The collages take a more abstract approach to these themes but embody them through their process of concealment, cutting apart and abstraction.

In the documentary "Tough Life Diary" produced in conjunction with Grossman's solo exhibition at the Frances Young Tang Museum, Grossman said:

The content of the work has to do, not with what has so often been attributed to it, bondage from the outside. It has to do with a closed in state. It has to do with the life of the mind and the head and the restrictions, self-imposed restrictions, society's imposed restrictions. I knew that they were right because I felt like I had to keep them secret…they were self-portraits and they incorporated my other, my male self, my otherness. My more complicated self, which is male and female at all times.

Nancy Grossman, born in New York City, grew up on a working farm in Oneonta, New York. Life on a rural farm with parents in the garment manufacturing business shaped Grossman's artistic vision and influenced her choice of materials. Collage assemblages of the 1960s and 1970s contain within their surfaces machinery parts, metal signs, wooden scraps and torn leather apparel; collages of the 1980s

and 1990s are threaded with personal paper memorabilia and remnants from the Chinatown neighborhood, where her studio was located for thirty-five years. A student of Richard Lindner at Pratt Institute (1957-1962), Grossman received her BA in 1962. That same year, she traveled on an Ida C. Haskell Award for Foreign Travel to Europe, where she made her first collages. In 1964, the Krasner Gallery in New York mounted Grossman's first solo exhibition, and in 1968, her leather-covered sculpture heads for which she is most noted first appeared at Cordier and Ekstrom Gallery, New York. Remarkably, in 1970 Grossman had five solo exhibitions; yet it was not until 1991, when the Hillwood Art Museum organized her first traveling retrospective exhibition, that the scope of her oeuvre was revealed. Grossman is represented in numerous museum collections including The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The National Museum of American Art, Washington, DC, The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond and The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, The Frances Young Tang Museum at Skidmore College and MoMA PS1. In 1991 her work was featured in Los Angeles in Connie Butler's Seminal MoCA show *Afterimage.* Grossman lives and continues to work in Brooklyn, New York.

For information about the exhibition or the gallery, please contact Alisun Woolery at 323.933.9911 or alisun@marcselwynfineart.com.