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MARILLA PALMER
The Wasp in the Garden

January 4th – February 10th, 2018

NEW YORK, NY—December 8th, 2017—Kathryn Markel Fine Arts is pleased to present *The Wasp in the Garden*, Marilla Palmer’s third solo show with the gallery.

There is an inextricable connection between nature and the work of Marilla Palmer in inspiration, process, and concept. Her mixed media pieces blur the distinction between the organic and artifice, using dried foliage and scavenged detritus alongside synthetic materials to enrich rendered paintings of branches and flowers.

In Palmer’s studio, leaves and petals that have been gathered from her garden are pressed, wings are collected from dead insects, and mushrooms are gathered to make spore prints. These elements sneak into the work among drawn shadows of branches and watercolor florals, often nearly undetectable until after careful inspection. Then, Palmer brings a touch of glamour with lush fabrics, sequins, and glitter, adding a celebratory level of additional beauty.

This juxtaposition is inspired by the nature paintings of the Rinpa school of the Edo period in Japan, particularly Sakai Hoitsu’s byōbu paintings that combine botanical renderings with stylized abstracted rivers. Palmer’s latest work shows even more of an homage to the tradition, with pieces that show her plants grounded by their surroundings like a sparkling river, or on display in a vase. These vase paintings are also a nod to ikebana, the Japanese art of flower arrangement that favors minimal shapes, lines, and forms and emphasizes a delicate balance of the elements.

Also included in the show are sculptures created from wasp nests, mirroring Palmer’s belief that wasps are the artists of the insect world. Considering their nests “site specific architectural” sculptures with “chiaroscuro swirling patterns,” she uses their abandoned creations as raw material to mold around mannequins, resulting in surreal human forms.

Marilla Palmer lives and works in Brooklyn, NY and has shown extensively throughout the United States. Her work has been exhibited at the Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Carlsbad Museum and Art Center, and MoMA PS1, among other galleries and institutions. She received her B.F.A from the Philadelphia College of Art.

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Marilla Palmer, *Blue Cactus, Blue Violets*, 2017, watercolor, silk, dragonfly wings, pressed foliage on Arches, 30 x 22 in.