



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FRANCES F. DENNY MAJOR ARCANA: WITCHES IN AMERICA

October 4 - November 24, 2018

*Opening reception:
Thursday, October 4, 2018
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.*

ClampArt is pleased to present “Frances F. Denny | Major Arcana: Witches in America,” the artist’s second solo show at the gallery.

“Major Arcana: Witches in America” is a collection of portraits of women from across the United States who identify as witches. Each woman photographed for “Major Arcana” pursues a form of witchcraft, whether aligned with a religion (like Wicca or Voodoo) or a self-defined practice. Many consider themselves pagan and engage in a diversity of traditions, including: mysticism, engagement with the occult, politically-oriented activism, polytheism, ritualized “spell-craft,” and plant-based healing.

Denny’s interest in modern-day witches began when she discovered during the course of research for a prior body of work that her 8th great-grandmother was accused of witchcraft in 1674 in Northampton, Massachusetts, and that nearly twenty years later, in 1692, her 10th great-grandfather presided as a judge in the Salem Witch Trials. She states: “[T]his ancestral coincidence stayed with me. What is a witch? Who does that word belong to—now?” In pursuit of her answer, Denny traveled coast-to-coast, meeting and photographing witches of diverse backgrounds with varying connections to the practice of witchcraft.

The historical oppression of those who practiced (or were merely accused of practicing) witchcraft is widely known; as early as 15th-century Europe, those condemned as witches faced torture and even death. However, recent decades have seen a reclaiming of the word “witch.” In the mid-20th century, emerging pagan communities in the United States and Europe began embracing the term, and since then, “witch” has been adopted by a diverse group of people. “Major Arcana” reflects that spectrum, re-framing the witch as a feminist archetype as well as the contemporary embodiment of a defiant, unsanctioned femininity. Today, as the current wave of feminism crests, one characterized by political activism, #metoo, and intersectionality—not to mention a certain cultural trendiness—witchcraft is suddenly relevant again to the mainstream.





Frances F. Denny (b. 1984) is an artist based in Brooklyn, New York, whose work investigates the development of female selfhood and identity. Her monograph, *Let Virtue Be Your Guide*, was published by Radius Books in 2015. She holds an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design and a BA from the Gallatin School at New York University.

For more information and images please contact Raechel McCarthy, Director, or see www.clamart.com. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m

Image 1: © Frances F. Denny, "Leonore (Montpelier, NY)," 2017, Archival pigment print (Edition of 5 + 2 APs), 26 x 20 inches.

Image 2: © Frances F. Denny, "Shine (New York, NY)," 2017, Archival pigment print (Edition of 5 + 2 APs), 26 x 20 inches.