

Art in America

EXHIBITIONS THE LOOKOUT



Joan Semmel

at Alexander Gray Associates,
through Oct. 15

510 West 26th Street

Joan Semmel has been documenting her own nude body for the past four decades, but her new paintings and drawings are as sensual and bracing as was her work in the 1970s. Close-up views of body parts (arms, breasts, thighs) in canvases like *Crossed Limbs*, *Cool Light*, and *Intimate Spaces* (all works 2016) look like undulating, fleshy landscapes. A half dozen paintings in the show, as well as several of the drawings, experiment with a technique that Semmel first used in her mid-1990s series “Overlays,” in which she reproduces line drawings of her body atop erotic paintings from the '70s to create layered, fragmentary compositions. In *Blue Embrace*, for instance, she covers abstracted, purplish breasts and limbs with gestural outlines of a woman's nude torso, her arms crossed almost placidly. —*Leigh Anne Miller*

Pictured: Joan Semmel: *Blue Embrace*, 2016, oil on canvas, 60 by 48 inches. Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York. © 2016 Joan Semmel/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.