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Robert Fishko, *Director*

For Immediate Release

MARIA TOMASULA
All the Breath We Can Hold
March 3 – April 7, 2018

Maria Tomasula (b. 1958, Chicago) has been exhibiting in Chicago and New York for two decades. Her mesmerizing paintings are carefully-arranged compositions of man-made objects and organic floral elements. Unlike conventional still lifes, they are the products of Tomasula's unique, vivid imagination in concept and in execution.

All the Breath We Can Hold, on view at Forum Gallery from March 3 to April 7, 2018, showcases Tomasula's most recent body of work: nine oil paintings and five graphite drawings filled with dazzling, teeming compositions and impossibly immaculate surfaces. Dramatic and ethereal lighting, often lit from below as if illuminating a stage, reveals each component in highly-rendered detail.

Maria Tomasula points to her Catholic upbringing as a wellspring for her art. She vividly recalls the idealized figures of saints, presented in scenes of horrific martyrdom that abound in the Baroque decorations of the Mexican Catholic churches she attended as a child. In her essay for the exhibition catalog, scholar Soo Y. Kang writes that "This is the genesis of her flower still lifes, which, although beautiful in overall appearance, are actually revealed to be tortured upon close examination, as the pieces are strenuously tied, pulled and pierced by nails, hooks and strings, the recurring instruments of affliction in Tomasula's oeuvre."

Looking to the 17th century philosopher Baruch Spinoza, as well as the New Materialist thinkers, Tomasula fuses ideas about the spiritual and physical into a thoroughly contemporary realm, which embeds the seemingly inanimate objects with a kind of eternal force. The artist describes her use of objects from the natural world, like bugs and flowers, as stand-ins for the human figure. As we do, these objects push and pull – attracted to and repelled against each other – their deliberate and precise arrangements appealing to the inquisitive mind and the appreciative eye.

In addition to many gallery exhibitions, Maria Tomasula's work has been celebrated in one-person exhibitions at the Snite Museum of Art (Notre Dame, IN), the National Museum of Mexican Art (Chicago), the Indianapolis Museum of Art, and twice at the South Bend Museum of Art (IN).

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Maria Tomasula: *All the Breath We Can Hold* opens with an artist talk and walk-through of the exhibition on Saturday, March 3, 2018 at 4:30 pm, followed by a reception for the artist from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm. The exhibition will be on view through Saturday, April 7, 2018.

Forum Gallery is located at 475 Park Avenue at 57th Street, New York, NY 10022. Please visit <http://forumgallery.com/exhibition/maria-tomasula-2018/> to view the entire exhibition online. Forum Gallery is open Monday through Saturday, 10 am to 5:30 pm. A full-color catalogue is available from the gallery.

For more information, please contact Kevin Dao, 212-355-4545; kevin@forumgallery.com