

Garth Greenan Gallery 545 West 20th Street New York New York 10011 212 929 1351 www.garthgreenan.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Garth Greenan  
(212) 929-1351  
garth@garthgreenan.com  
www.garthgreenan.com

## The Independent 2019



*Ring of Fire, 1982*

For the 2019 edition of *The Independent*, New York, the gallery presents *Sunshine & Noir*, an exhibition of mixed-media installations by Alexis Smith. Works on display include large-scale collages hung with a wall painting—spanning from the 1970s to the 90s. Not since the artist's 1991 survey at the Whitney Museum of American Art have any of them been exhibited.

The City of Los Angeles is a career-long fascination for Smith. Her collages uniquely capture and critique the particular brand of Americana found chiefly on the West Coast. Smith specifically considers Hollywood the epicenter of where the American Dream both lives and dies. For her, Hollywood is a place of illusion/delusion where the allure of glitz and glamour endlessly persists. In *Masculine/Feminine* (1978) and *Golden Glow*

(1995), steering wheels and air fresheners are among the collaged elements, signaling the classic American drive out West.

In works such as *Ring of Fire* (1982), Smith pairs flames with characteristically acerbic text. Creating her own version of hell, Smith draws the viewer ever closer to the heat of 11-foot flames. Here, it is almost as if her small scale collages have exploded, invading the wall and coming out from it in the form of a basketball hoop. This wall graphic is reminiscent of cinema posters, billboards, and WPA murals. Thus, Smith creates a tension between the monumental public image and her more intimately-scaled collages. As Gregory Ulmer has written, in “The Object of Post Criticism,”

[Means of mechanical reproduction receive] exact copies of sights and sounds (in collage terms, mechanical reproduction removes or lifts sights and sounds from their contexts—de-motivates them, hence the loss of reference, the undecidability of allusion), only to re-motivate them as signifiers in a new system.

Born in Los Angeles in 1949, Alexis Smith studied painting at the University of California, Irvine. She has exhibited extensively, including shows with Mizuno Gallery (1974, Los Angeles), Whitney Museum of American Art (1975, 1991, New York), Nicholas Wilder Gallery (1977, Los Angeles), Holly Solomon Gallery (1977, 1978, 1979, 1981, 1983, New York), Rosamund Felsen Gallery (1978, 1980, 1982, Los Angeles), Margo Leavin Gallery (1985, 1988, 1990, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2009, Los Angeles), Walker Art Center (1986, Minneapolis), Wexner Center for the Arts (1997, Columbus, Ohio), Greenberg Van Doren Gallery (2001, 2004, New York), and Honor Fraser Gallery (2013, 2016, Los Angeles).

The artist’s work has also been included in many important museum exhibitions, such as *American Narrative: 1967–1977* (1977, Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston), *Making Their Mark: Women Artists Move into the Mainstream, 1970–1985* (1989, Cincinnati Art Museum), *Image World: Art and Media Culture* (1989, Whitney Museum of American Art), *Sunshine & Noir: Art in L.A., 1960–1997* (1997, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art), and *Made in California: Art, Image, and Identity* (2000, Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

Most recently, Smith was included in *Los Angeles: Birth of an Art Capital* (Centre Georges Pompidou, 2006), *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (2007, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles), *Under the Big Black Sun: California Art, 1974–1981* (2011–2012, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles), and *Physical: Sex and Body in the 1980s* (2016, Los Angeles County Museum of Art).

A retrospective of Smith’s work is currently being organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego.

Smith’s work is featured in the collections of major museums around the country, including the Hammer Museum, University of California, Los Angeles; the High Museum of Art, Atlanta; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; the Museum of Modern Art; the Walker Art Center; and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to represent Alexis Smith.

The Independent is open to the public at 50 Varick Street, Friday, March 8–Sunday, March 10, 2019. The private viewing, by invitation only, will take place on Thursday, March 7, 2019. For more information, please visit their website, contact the gallery at (212) 929-1351, or email [info@garthgreenan.com](mailto:info@garthgreenan.com).