



Rosalyn Drexler Exhibit to Open 2/12 at Rose Art Museum

JANUARY 13, 2016

While her sculptures were received with enthusiasm and encouragement from her peers, in the early 1960s Drexler turned her attention to painting, building compositions from the groundwork of collage-found images cropped, layered, and emphasized with paint. Drexler's collages and large format paintings of the 1960s depict conflict and sexuality with unusual frankness. Reverberating with Pop art, Drexler's work exceeds the conventions of that category to include technology and politics, crossing hardedge painting with direct depictions of sex, violence, race, femininity, and masculine power in postwar America. The exhibition follows her work through the present moment to her most recent paintings, which are dream-like, retrospective and introspective all at once.

Drexler has long been a cult literary figure, and her visual sensibility is related to literary models that include theater of the absurd and Samuel Beckett; avant-garde peers such as Whitman, Oldenburg and playwright Maria Fornes; and the popular American culture of J.D. Salinger, B-movies, and Rocky (for which she wrote the novel, rendering the anti-hero impotent). In Drexler's writing the gendered role-playing of her paintings becomes outrageous melodrama, crossing high and low genres to include avant-garde theater, writing for television (including an Emmy-winning Lily Tomlin special), and novels both experimental and popular.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully-illustrated monographic catalog, offering a comprehensive look well beyond the scope and scale of the exhibition, treating in detail the development of Drexler's work to date. The catalog includes an introduction by Katy Siegel; an essay by novelist Jonathan Lethem on Drexler's writing; an appreciation by Hilton Als; and new scholarship by Michael Lobel, Kalliopi Minioudaki, Caitlin Julia Rubin, and Allison Unruh that ranges across five decades of Drexler's art.