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## Rosalyn Drexler: *Vulgar Lives*

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to announce *Rosalyn Drexler: Vulgar Lives*, an exhibition of paintings and drawings at **529 West 20th Street**. Opening on February 19, 2015, the exhibition is the artist's first in almost a decade. Eleven of Drexler's bold, psychologically complex paintings will be on view, in addition to a series of preparatory drawings, all created between 1960 and 2014. Only one of the works in the exhibition has ever been shown in a New York gallery. A fully illustrated catalogue will accompany the exhibition, with an essay by Robert Cozzolino.

The exhibition and its accompanying publication focus on two bodies of Drexler's work—her uniquely prescient, Pop collage-paintings from the 1960s and a group of related works created between 1988 and 2014. A pioneer of what would later become known as appropriation, Drexler's paintings from the 1960s incorporate images culled from a variety of popular sources—newswire photographs, detective novels, movie posters, and advertisements. Unlike her Pop contemporaries, Drexler worked from these images directly—collaging them onto her canvases and painting over them in thin layers. Her subjects are straightforwardly portrayed, usually against monochromatic grounds or simple arrangements of geometric shapes. They appear isolated and bizarrely still—uncomfortable in the narratives into which they have been inserted. Narrative content has always been at the forefront of Drexler's work. The grotesqueness and vulgarity of our everyday lives—especially those of businessmen, celebrities, and politicians—are the artist's primary concerns.



*Our Lady of Doves*, 1988



*Maui Wowie (Jean-Michel and Andy Take a Trip)*, 1989

Drexler's recent paintings are more elaborate and open-ended. The backgrounds are more detailed and there are often multiple narratives occurring simultaneously. Her source images are less obvious, as well. Frequently, her subjects wear masks or face away from the viewer. Love and violence—our two most “intimate emotions,” Drexler says—are still their central themes.

Born in Bronx, New York in 1926, Rosalyn Drexler first began exhibiting her work during the late 1950s. Since then, she has had over 15 solo exhibitions, including one at Reuben Gallery (1960, New York), three at Kornblee Gallery (1964, 1965, 1966, New York), and one at Pace Gallery (2007, New York). In 1986, a retrospective of her work—*Rosalyn Drexler: Intimate Emotions*—opened at the Grey Art Gallery, New York University. *Rosalyn Drexler and the Ends of Man*, the artist's most recent survey exhibition, took place in 2006 at Rutgers University's Paul Robeson Gallery (Newark, New Jersey).

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Drexler's paintings were featured in many important museum exhibitions, such as *Pop Art USA* (1963, Oakland Art Museum, California), *The Painter and the Photograph* (1964, Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University), *American Pop Art* (1974, Whitney Museum of American Art), and *Another Aspect of Pop Art*, (1978, P.S. 1, Institute for Art and Urban Resources). In 2010, her work figured prominently in Sid Sachs' landmark exhibition *Seductive Subversion: Women Pop Artists, 1958–1968* (2010, University of the Arts), as well as *Power Up: Female Pop Art* at the Kunsthalle Wien. Currently, Drexler's paintings are on view in *Pop to Popism* at Australia's Art Gallery of New South Wales. *International Pop*, upcoming at the Walker Art Center (April 2015), will also include several examples of her work.

Drexler's paintings are in the collections of many museums, including: the Allen Memorial Art Gallery, Oberlin College; the Grey Art Gallery, New York University; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution; the Wadsworth Athenaeum; the Walker Art Center; and the Whitney Museum of American Art.

In addition to her work as a visual artist, Drexler is also an accomplished novelist and playwright. She published her first play in 1963 and her first novel in 1965. She is the recipient of three Obie Awards, as well as an Emmy Award for her work on Lily Tomlin's television special *Lily* (co-written with Richard Pryor).

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to represent Rosalyn Drexler.

*Rosalyn Drexler: Vulgar Lives* will be on view at **Garth Greenan Gallery, 529 West 20th Street** (between Tenth and Eleventh Avenues), through **Saturday, March 28, 2015**. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. For more information, **please contact Garth Greenan at (212) 929-1351, or email garth@garthgreenan.com**.

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