

Another Aspect of Pop: D’Arcangelo, Drexler, Krushenick

For the 2017 edition of Art Basel: Miami Beach, Garth Greenan Gallery will present an exhibition of five signature works by three gallery artists: Allan D’Arcangelo, Rosalyn Drexler, and Nicholas Krushenick. Throughout their careers, the trio exhibited together widely—first during the late 1950s in New York’s Tenth Street artists’ cooperatives (March, Brata, and Reuben)—and later at the Fischbach and Kornblee galleries. Most notably, however, their paintings appeared in countless historic group exhibitions, many of which problematized the characterization of their work as Pop. Within the broader context of American art of the 1960s and 1970s, it has become clear that the paintings of D’Arcangelo, Drexler, and Krushenick cover a wider ground.



Rosalyn Drexler, *The Lesson (Men and Machines)*, 1962

The presentation will include two paintings by Allan D’Arcangelo—*The Rheingold Girls* (1963) and *Untitled #2* (1965). *The Rheingold Girls* is the first in a series of four works by the artist portraying women and girls with blank, featureless faces—almost like paper dolls. The source images for this painting are actual labels from New York’s Rheingold Beer. Each year saw the coronation of a new “Miss Rheingold,” as well as the publication of a calendar. Politically involved throughout his career, D’Arcangelo, in this work, deliberately comments on the inequality and commodification of women in American society.

In the later 1960s, D’Arcangelo embarked on his consuming meditation on the nature of the built environment and its effects on our national psyche. He began the “Road” series—of which *Untitled #2* is a major example—depicting in strong, flat compositions the telescoped impressions of the painter/driver through endlessly similar landscapes. Can these images, vertiginously racing toward infinity, be called reality? The landscape flees us, reminds us of no particular place, and yet somehow is still saturated with associations of American experiences.

Also featured will be two paintings by Rosalyn Drexler—*The Lesson* (1962) and *Candy and Mel (Two Hearts Beat as One)* (1966)—both quintessential examples of the artist’s early work. The true stars of these paintings are anonymous men and women, featured in everyday gender performances and ominous homosocial encounters. They expose not only the underside of the American Dream but also a vision of America as the violent and self-violated world of white males. In the series, “Men and Machines,” of which *The Lesson* is a part, the artist celebrates what she describes as the “concentration of men at work.”

Finally, the presentation will include Nicholas Krushenick’s *Son of King Kong* (1966), one of his most iconic works. It appears on the cover of the recently published monograph on the artist, *Nicholas Krushenick: Electric Soup* (Prestel), and is the subject of an essay by the National Gallery of Art’s Harry Cooper. In the painting, two bulbous orange-and-blue-striped shapes, like the heads of giant snakes, approach each other from above and below on a horizontally bisected background of diagonal red and yellow stripes. Whether they will kiss, bite, or explode when they meet is unclear, and the suspenseful tension is delightfully alarming. The gregariousness and overt sexuality of this painting is a pointed

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critique of “art for art’s sake” and its lack of humor. At a moment in time during the 1960s, “serious abstract painting” was not meant to be funny.

To be sure, each of these artists engaged with the visual language of Pop—flat imagery, the industrial techniques of billboards and sign painting, and an overall dissociation from the niceties of “art.” Where D’Arcangelo, Drexler, and Krushenick differed from their peers, however, was in the sometimes coded nature of the social commentary inherent in their work.

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to represent Rosalyn Drexler and the Estates of Allan D’Arcangelo and Nicholas Krushenick.