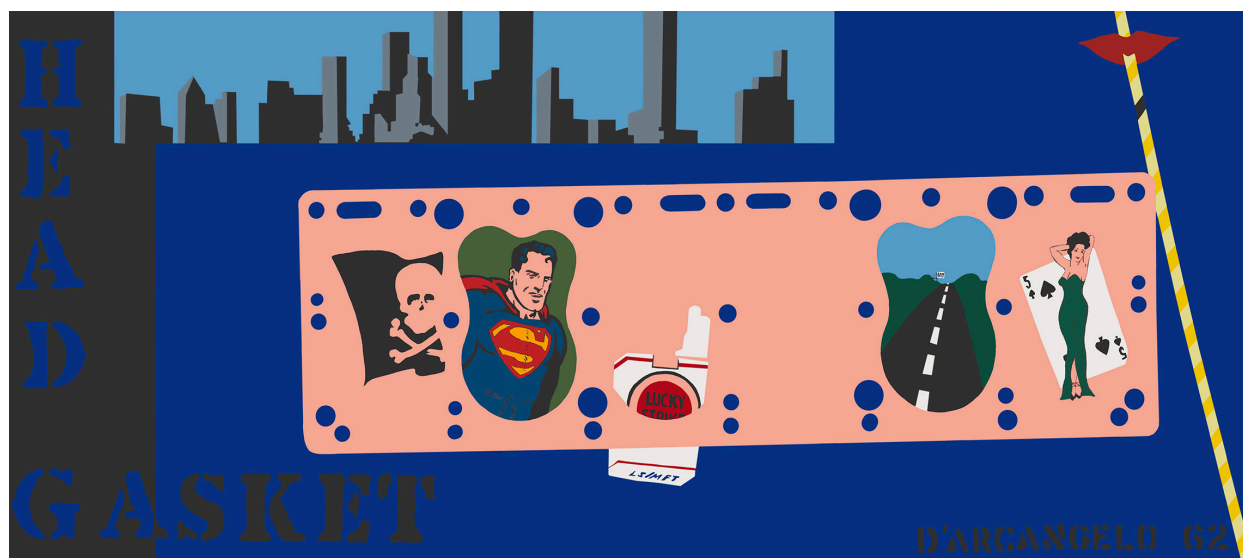


## Art Basel: Miami Beach



Allan D'Arcangelo, *Head Gasket #2*, 1962

For the 2019 edition of Art Basel: Miami Beach, Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of signature works by five gallery artists—Peter Blake, Melissa Cody, Allan D'Arcangelo, Rosalyn Drexler, and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. While all artists in this presentation are unified in their bold use of color, each mobilizes that color to different ends: from Rosalyn Drexler's transformation of found imagery through dramatic overpainting to Jaune Quick-to-See Smith's critique of racialized cultural discourse through her symbolic use of red pigments. Additionally, in the Meridians section of Art Basel: Miami Beach, Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to present Alexis Smith's monumental wall painting, *Fool's Gold* (1982). This presentation marks the first time the work has been shown since the artist's major 1991 survey at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith's iconic series *I See Red* explores the color's indelible and complicated associations with Native American identity. The monumental example included in this presentation, *I See Red: Target* (1992), evokes the stripes of the American flag. Reproductions of an advertisement depicting half a dozen men and women in traditional Native American dress is repeated in horizontal rows, forming regular breaks in the sanguine bands of red. Other collage elements interspersed throughout the red paint, like a Redskins "Super Bowl XXVI Champions" pennant and excerpts from a Tomahawk comic book, explore the universe of cultural associations related to Native Americans. Taxonomic drawings of frogs, buffalo, and other flora and fauna evoke the frequent conflation of Native Americans with nature. Yet other elements complicate the painting. A clipping from the *Char-Koosta News*, the official news publication of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes, highlights the debut of a dance composition by six contemporary Native American artists. Another headline reads, "Defying the Stereotypes." The work forms a picture of America's dizzying and often contradictory relationship to Native Americans: one of subjugation, stereotyping, and romanticization.

A fixture of the American Pop scene, Rosalyn Drexler pioneered a technique of cutting reproductions from magazines, fixing them directly to canvas, and overpainting the resulting collage with bold color. In *Big Moe* (1963), the composition is abruptly bisected, depicting a slain gangster on the left, and a funerary wreath bearing his name—Big Moe—on the right. The wreath, and the painting's color scheme dominated by reds and greens, introduce an unsettling ambiguity: recalling the jovial winter holiday Christmas while at the same time depicting a grisly scene of murder. America's peculiar relationship to violence, both its cinematic and real cultural presence, is a favorite subject for the artist.

(more)

Peter Blake's life-size sculpture, *Locker* (1959), is pasted with cutouts of Marilyn Monroe, Bridget Bardot, and other cultural icons. Like a high schooler's locker, the collage is an affectionately assembled shrine to personal enthusiasms. As if to highlight lockers' peculiar role as private bastions amidst public spaces, Blake makes use of both the internal and external surfaces of his locker. The images from French cinema, luxury advertisements, musicians, bodybuilders, and celebrities, stand in for aspirations, desires, interests, and hobbies, compiled for the benefit of the locker's owner as well as those nearby. While Drexler transforms her collages through ambitious overpainting, Blake often presents cutouts unadorned and unaltered, reflecting his earnest, almost childlike appreciation for the often tacky, crass, and endlessly fascinating universe of popular culture.

Allan D'Arcangelo's painting, *Head Gasket #2* (1962), similarly relies on popular culture, but of a particularly American variety. A pink head gasket with six openings frames a sequence of images: a pirate flag, a square-jawed Superman, a pack of Lucky Strikes, a 5 of Spades (often symbolic of changes or travel), and a road. The head gasket's slant, along with the Lucky Strikes slipping out of the gasket's frame, create a sense of movement. And a midnight blue and black background suggests the disparate elements might all have played some roll in a haphazard road trip, complete with mechanical issues, being recalled on a nocturnal drive. A cityscape hovers at the top of the painting as if in a rearview mirror.

Melissa Cody's *Woven in the Stones* (2018) combines traditional Navajo patterns into sophisticated geometric overlays and haptic color schemes. A fourth-generation Navajo weaver, Melissa Cody's intricate tapestries draw from the tradition of the Germantown Revival, a stylistic movement named after the government wool from Germantown, Pennsylvania, that was supplied to the Navajo during the time of the Long Walk. The weaving style was characterized by a complex interaction of traditional and historical contingencies: Vivid commercial dyes and new economic pressures prompted enterprising Navajo weavers to adapt, creating bold new textiles. The commercial viability of the craft became a means of continuance, even as it altered it.

Measuring nearly 11 by 22 feet, Alexis Smith's *Fool's Gold* was the largest of the three murals included in Smith's 1982 solo exhibition *Satan's Satellites* at Rosamund Felsen Gallery, Los Angeles. By that time, Smith had largely shifted from literary to pulp and pop references—more resonant compliments to her iconic imagery. Around the same time, her small-scale collages exploded into large installations and murals, evidencing her growing ambition and confidence. In leaving behind poignant literary observations, her work increasingly relied on her own ability to spot the strange and messy constellations of meaning present in popular culture and cliché. As if embracing Simone Weil's precept that “on the whole . . . second class works and below are most suitable for the elite, and absolutely first class works most suitable for the people,” her work became unabashedly pop in its sources and realization.

In the painting—a desert scene spotted with cacti and circling buzzards—an old prospector and his burro traverse the arid landscape within a painted trompe l'oeil wood frame, captioned, “Sometimes men went crazy from the heat.” While the phrase might have come from a pulp romance novel, Smith repurposes it, hinting at the prospector's existential despair and delirium. A white plaster cowgirl is fixed to the painting, so that she rides side-saddle on the donkey. The figure, alabaster white and three dimensional, is out of place, like a mirage or erotic hallucination.

The bold colors used by these artists might hint at a sensuous or even hedonistic aesthetic, yet each deployed color to specific and often profound purpose.

Garth Greenan Gallery is pleased to represent Peter Blake, Melissa Cody, Rosalyn Drexler, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Alexis Smith, and the Estate of Allan D'Arcangelo.