

presented by: ARTSCENE

Editorial Venues

Calendar

About us

Contact

Editorial: Recommendations

< Return

Lynn Aldrich

DENK, Los Angeles, California Recommendation by David S. Rubin



Lynn Aldrich, "Pet Rescue for the Anthropocene," 2017, fake fur swatches, steel chain leash, 20 x 45 x 7"

Continuing through July 13, 2019

For more than thirty years Lynn Aldrich has employed meticulous craftsmanship to transform common consumer materials into metaphoric artworks that reflect what she views as the "excess, spectacle and artificiality" of Los Angeles culture. Guided by her calculated thought process, she adeptly reconfigures things purchased mostly at home improvement stores to muse humorously, and at times profoundly on our relationship to the environment. In this survey, several of the newer works on view address climate change and its threat to survival. "Cloudburst" (2016) and "Reverse the Rain" (2019) are tree shaped structures made of vinyl hoses and inverted drainpipes respectively, with trunks topped by crowns that seem to dance vigorously. Their darker meaning is suggested by the titles and the positioning of the open mouths and spouts of the hoses and pipes, which point in multiple directions ready to spew water everywhere. The end of the world as we know it is also implied in "Pet Rescue for the Anthropocene" (2017) where mass extinction of animals is alluded to by both the title and an array of fake fur samples attached to a leash. It's also a hilarious send-up of Giacomo Balla's futurist "Dog on a Leash."

In a selection of late 1980s diptychs, Aldrich cleverly juxtaposes painted appropriations of art historical depictions of nature with fragments of mass-produced consumer items that simulate trees, rocks, or water using industrial or manufactured materials. In "Evergreen (Fragment after Casper David Friedrich)" (1987) a painted falling tree appropriated from the great Romantic's "Rocky Landscape in the Elbe Sandstone Mountains" (1822) is joined with vinyl upholstery shaped like the right half of a Christmas tree. This is more than a polemic of how trees are vanishing due to deforestation to satisfy consumers, but it does get us to think about it. Aldrich's Christmas tree is a shining slapstick example of a living tree's demise.

Given the seriousness of the issues addressed, the tone and use of materials are consistently playful and ironic. Additionally, Aldrich provides an escape hatch in the form of "Hermitage" (2019), a towering telescope-shaped column made from Sonotubes (molds for concrete) that can be entered through a small door so as to be experienced from within. Inspired by James Turrell's skyspaces, which are designed to be high tech meditative retreats, inside "Hermitage" (the title alluding to the selfsame retreat) we can sit on carpeted flooring and gaze upward towards a lighting fixture to see overlapping rings of color and light, created though the low tech magic of plastics and electricity. It's magical no less than Turrell's version, but Aldrich delights in giving away the trick.

Denk Gallery

What's on Los Angeles | Index

Pick of the Week

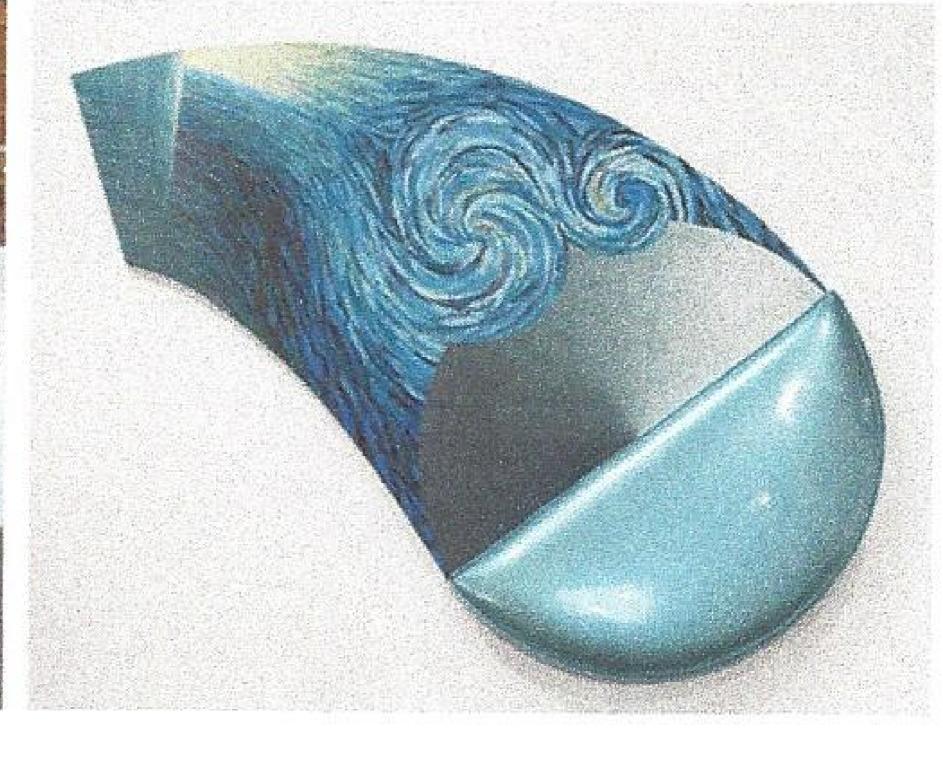
by Jody Zellen

file:///Users/lynnaldrich/Desktop/What's on Los Angeles.html

July 4, 2019







Lynn Aldrich at Denk Gallery

Lynn Aldrich has an incredible knack for transforming everyday building and household materials into something unexpected. Throughout her long career, she has continued to delve into the depths of her imagination to create floor sculptures and wall works that are both fascinating and enchanting. What is most surprising about her current exhibition, O' Magnify, is the inclusion of works from the mid 1980's when Aldrich was combining painting and sculpted elements that referenced specific artists and the history of art. Pathways (Fragments After Smithson and Van Gogh), 1988 is a shaped canvas with a painted spiral that follows the shape of Smithson's Spiral Jetty imposed atop an ambiguous void. To the right of these painted elements is a sculpted form that resembles a scorpion's tail. Similarly, in Visitation (Fragment After Van Gogh), 1988, Aldrich paints a fragment from Van Gogh's Starry Night on an oblong shaped canvas with a blue upholstered vinyl half circle endpoint. While these early works clearly articulate Aldrich's appreciation of art history, they are playful modifications of the past that are useful in understanding Aldrich's trajectory from representation to abstraction.

Included in O' Magnify is one of Aldrich's largest works to date. Entitled Hermitage (2019), this work is comprised painted plastic disks as well as a fourteen foot Sonotube which can be entered through a small doorway. Once inside the enclosure, viewers can look up and down. It is a marvel that through the use of these simple materials, Aldrich has created a unique light and space sculptural akin to the works of James Turell.

Aldrich's pieces also have an aspect of <u>play</u>. This comes in part from her materials, but also from her sensibilities and the way she combines and repurposes found elements. *Pet Rescue for the Anthropocene*, (2017) is a round silver ring with an array of fake fur swatches in multiple colors and patterns attached to a steel chain leash. On the wall, the artwork alludes to the movement of some absent cartoony animal reminiscent of Giacomo Balla's *Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash*. Also presented are examples of Aldrich's vinyl hose and galvanized steel constructions combined to resemble trees and plant-forms made from house-hold and construction materials. In *Water Tangle* (2018), Aldrich has assembled sections of galvanized steel gutters, creating graceful curves that flow up and down, back and forth like a memory of the movement of dancers on a stage. The gutters in *Reverse the Rain* (2019), also fashioned from galvanized steel, extend up from the floor as a series of vertical columns, each with a unique twist at the top. These works negate the original functionality of the materials, turning them into something more organic and fanciful.

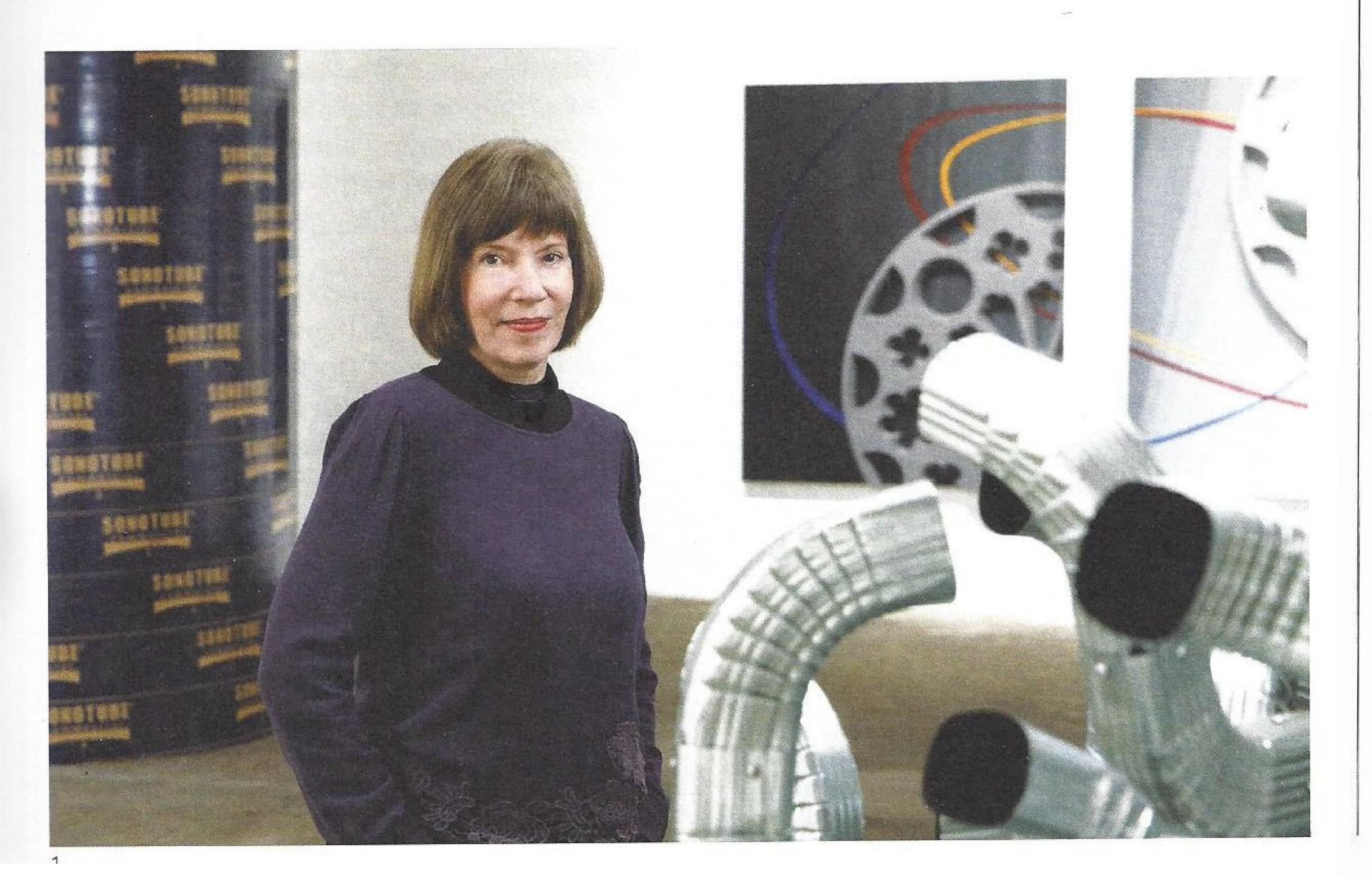
Crack! and *Porthole* (both 2019) are made from hand-cut <u>plastic roofing</u> panels. It is easy to imagine Aldrich in <u>Home</u> Depot looking at the different colors and textures of such substances while pondering the ways she might cut and combine them into sculptures that transform and expand upon their base properties — like making a porthole that references the undulations of the sea from textured plastic.

For more than thirty years, Aldrich has reassigned function to <u>create</u> beautiful works that have both a formal elegance but also speak to the relationship between the natural and man-made worlds. In each successive exhibition, Aldrich has continued to invent new ways of transforming the ordinary into something transcendent.

Romantic and Realist: Lynn Aldrich

WRITER Scott Timberg

PHOTOGRAPHER Juan Posada



Lynn Aldrich (MFA 86 Art) doesn't seem to be able to make up her mind. She wants objects—hard, cheap, common objects—and ideas as well. And the ideas can get big—philosophical, even celestial: She wants her art to be vehicles for them, even if the materials she uses come from 99 Cents Only stores and Office Depots.

She loves minimalism and what she calls "the ethics of minimalism: that you should not be deceitful about your materials." But she goes beyond minimalist orthodoxy: That's why a stack of paper plates can turn into an ancient Greek column, or an array of rainspouts can become something that seems to belong in Renaissance Italy. Speaking to Aldrich, you realize she lives in the world and on the astral plane simultaneously.

It may be difficult for Aldrich to reconcile her dialectical imagination. But the winner in this struggle between object and idea, head and heart, Apollo and Dionysus, is the curious person who encounters Aldrich's work. Howard Fox, the emeritus LACMA curator who has known Aldrich for decades, describes her work as a place "where something thoughtful and reflective is going on."

Aldrich is not unaware of her divided soul. "I have two sides, the realist and the romantic—I can't shake it."

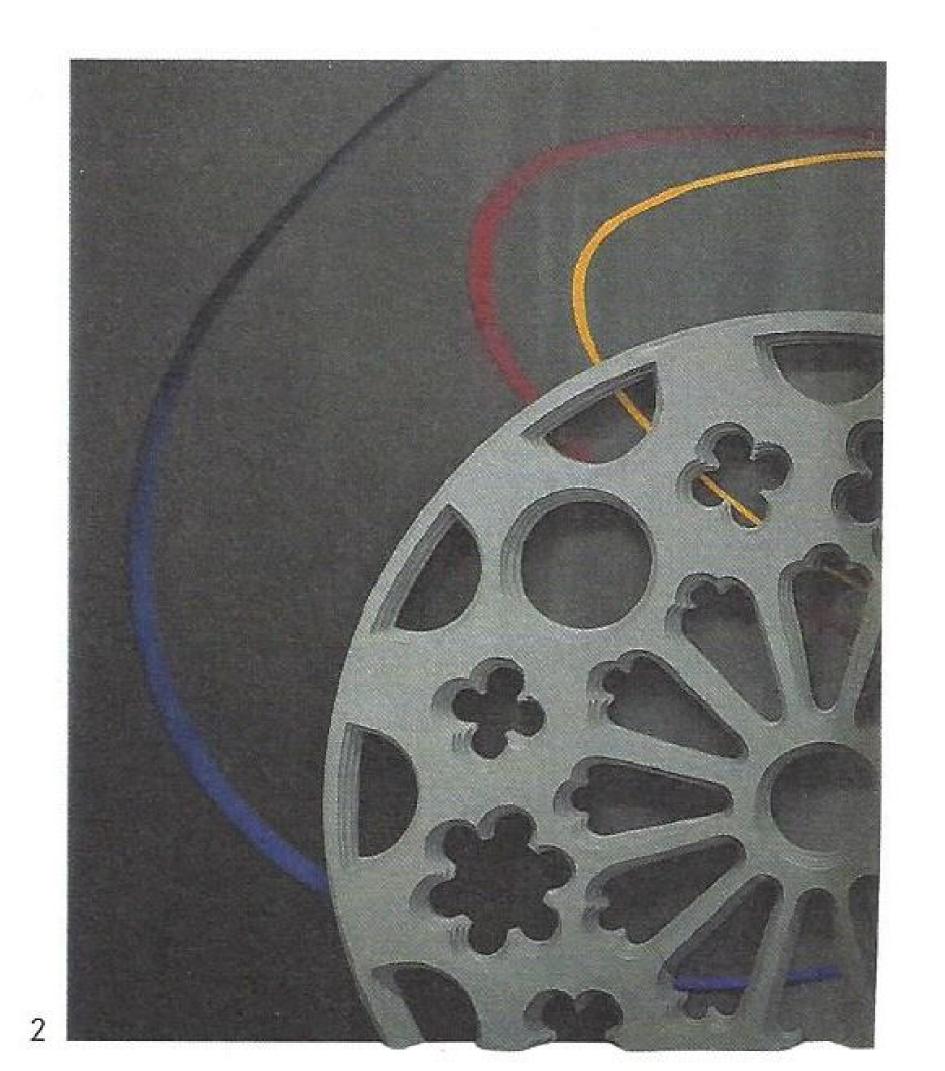
Some of her complex ambitions come from her formative years. Aldrich was born in East Texas and grew up a military brat whose family moved every few years. Her early interests were the sciences and literature. As an adult, in the early 1970s she moved with her husband to the Glendale hills. About a decade later, she enrolled at ArtCenter and studied with Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe. There, she began to find her direction.

"I was lucky enough to be at a school—ArtCenter—that was aware of beauty, of the physical nature of things," Aldrich says. She had been captivated by the conceptual art of John Baldessari. But concepts weren't enough—"I wanted to make something beautiful, something to look at." The program later helped launch her: "You have models, people who've done this before you."

She says now, standing in a ranch house she describes as "Midcentury Modest": "My art is not about me psychologically or about my identity; it's about my outward gaze on the world. I think artists share that with scientists."

Today, she says, "Artists can either jump in and address the digital world or step back and say, 'Look at this.'" Chances are, she'll do both.

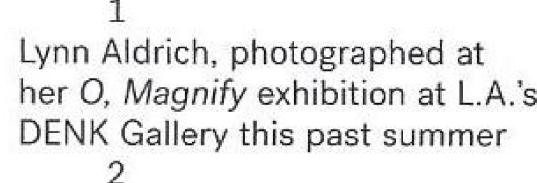
LEGACY











Broken Rose, 2019
Oil paint, acrylic paint and sheet rock on three wood panels
3
Pet Rescue for the Anthropocene,

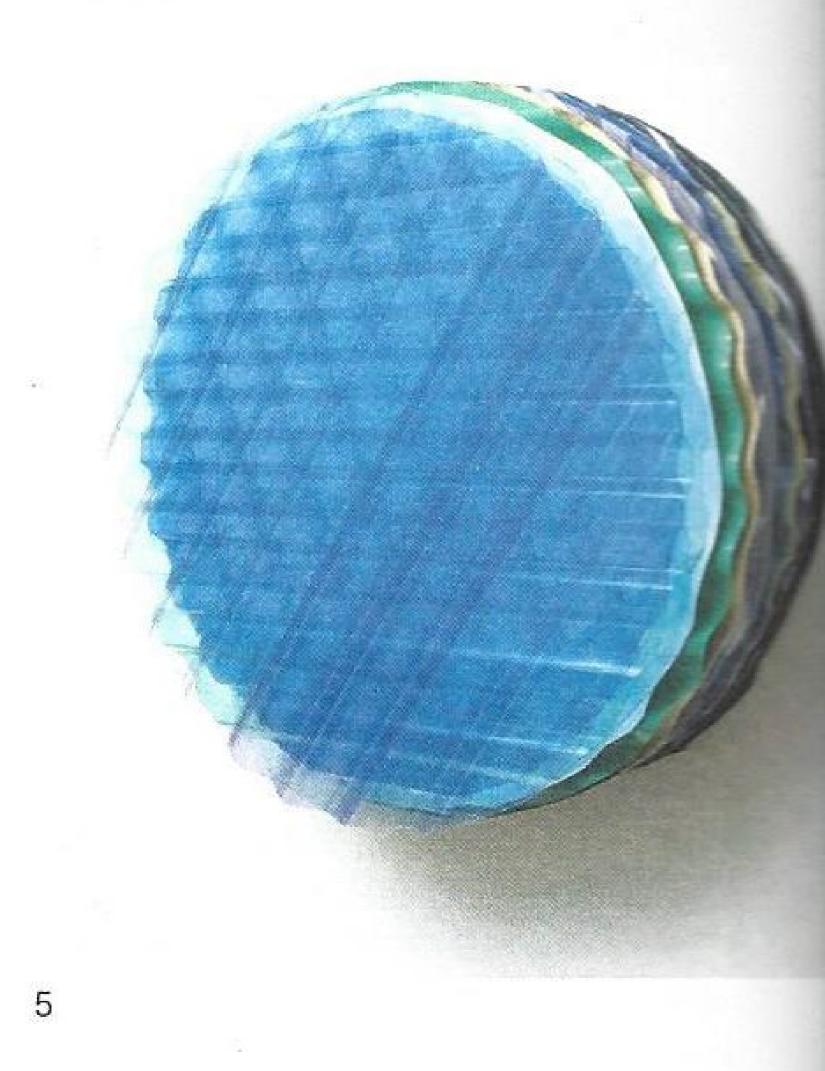
2017 Fake fur swatches, steel chain leash

notographed at Water Tangle, 2018
exhibition at L.A.'s Galvanized steel, acrylic paint is past summer 5

Porthole, 2019
Hand-cut plastic roofing panels
on acrylic support

Images 2-5 courtesy of DENK Gallery





Los Angeles Times

Review

Lynn Aldrich transforms the physical in 'Velvet Painting: Ascension'



Lynn Aldrich's "Velvet Painting: Ascension" at Edward Cella Art & Architecture.

by Leah Ollman

Lynn Aldrich's "Velvet Painting: Ascension" is at once a sly joke and a gorgeous reverie.

Not a painting at all, the 2015 piece, at Edward Cella, is really an assemblage that mimics the format of a medium-size (50-by-38 inch) painting. Aldrich has stacked hundreds of velvet and velveteen strips so that, as with a cross-section, we see more edge than surface.

The fabrics gradate from black, at the bottom, through browns, purples, violets, pinks and golds up to pale lemon and white at the top. Through her deft use of materials, Aldrich has, indeed, staged an ascension, elevating the lowbrow genre of velvet painting into a vehicle of greater profundity, while symbolically suggesting the Ascension, Christ's rise from earthly body to heavenly spirit.

Not every work in the show packs this much punch, but transformation of the physical is a constant throughout, as is Aldrich's signature verbal/visual wit. She invokes a sort of transparent alchemy that allows common objects (from notebook paper to birdcages here) to remain common even as they assume more precious value, carrying metaphorical weight or spiritual significance.

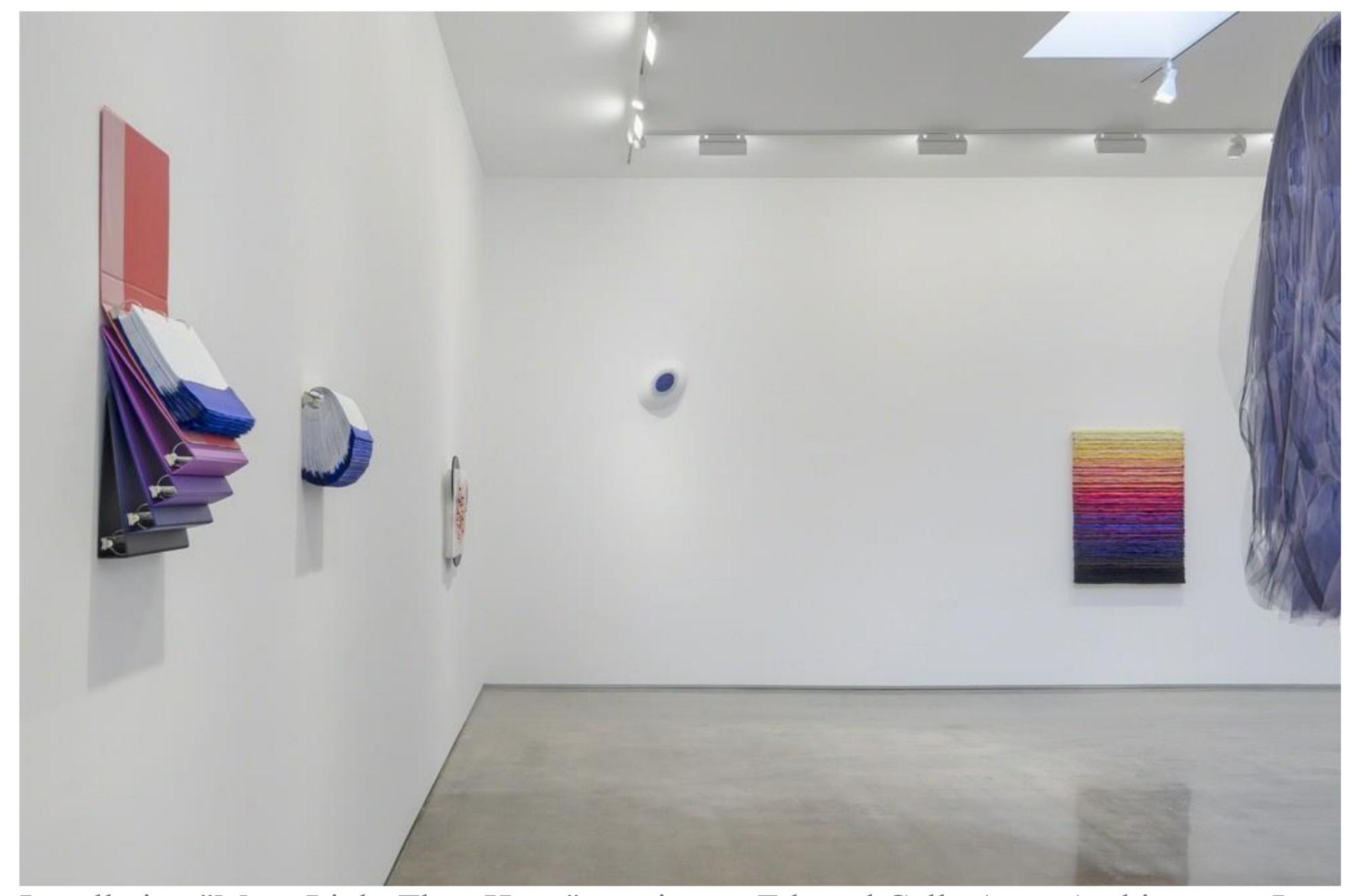
Her luminous rose window made of layered tulle cut like a stencil is a wonder in this regard. Six feet in diameter and suspended from the ceiling, it is at once clever as a Claes Oldenburg soft sculpture, and transcendent as its Gothic model.

Edward Cella Art & Architecture, 2754 S. La Cienega Blvd., (323) 525-0053, through Dec. 5. Closed Sunday and Monday.

ARTSY

Stained Glass and the Expanding Universe Inspire Lynn Aldrich's New Sculptures

ARTSY EDITORIAL
BY RACHEL WILL
NOV 4TH, 2015 11:51 PM



Installation "More Light Than Heat," on view at Edward Cella Art + Architecture, Los Angeles, 2015. Courtesy edward Cella Art + Architecture.

Think back to the beginning of the original "Light and Space Movement"—it's not the West Coast Minimal art movement the 1960s and '70s, Lynn Aldrich would argue, but rather the stained glass windows found in cathedrals across Western Europe. This original play on light is something that inspired painters during the late Middle Ages, and also serves as a

driving inspiration behind works in Aldrich's latest show, "More Light Than Heat," at Edward Cella Art + Architecture.





Lynn Aldrich
The Universe in Captivity, 2015
Edward Cella Art and Architecture

Lynn Aldrich

Velvet Painting: Ascension, 2015

Edward Cella Art and Architecture

SOLD

Aldrich, whose oeuvre was previously defined by the use of readymade products, seemingly plucked from the shelves of a hardware store, reintroduces oil painting, ink, and velvet (materials she's used in the past) in this exhibition, as her tools to explore the phenomenon and the metaphorical possibilities of light. Her sculptures in the exhibition vary from a birdcage

filled with suspended discs topped with pom poms, to paintings made from layer upon layer of colorful velvet in a graduated array.



Lynn Aldrich
Ink Wave, 2015
Edward Cella Art and Architecture

Lynn Aldrich
Inkling Icon, 2015
Edward Cella Art and Architecture

An Art Center College of Design MFA grad who studied under Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe and Mike Kelley during the 1980s, Aldrich's process doesn't begin with her eye-catching materials. Instead, it starts with sketches, reading, and sometimes titles. Her works have even referenced painting with Duchampian flair—employing paints as "readymades" to be incorporated into her sculpture.



Installation "More Light Than Heat," on view at Edward Cella Art + Architecture, Los Angeles, 2015. Courtesy Edward Cella Art + Architecture.

With the centerpiece of the exhibition, the wall-sized installation *Rosy Future* (2015), Aldrich highlights her investigation into light within the grey stone interiors of cathedrals. Through her contemporary reimagining of the stained glass in the form of drywall, tar paper, and oil painting, she aims to compare the inspiration behind the awe-inspiring windows to the concept of the rapidly expanding universe around us, a comparison that leads the artist to questions of faith.



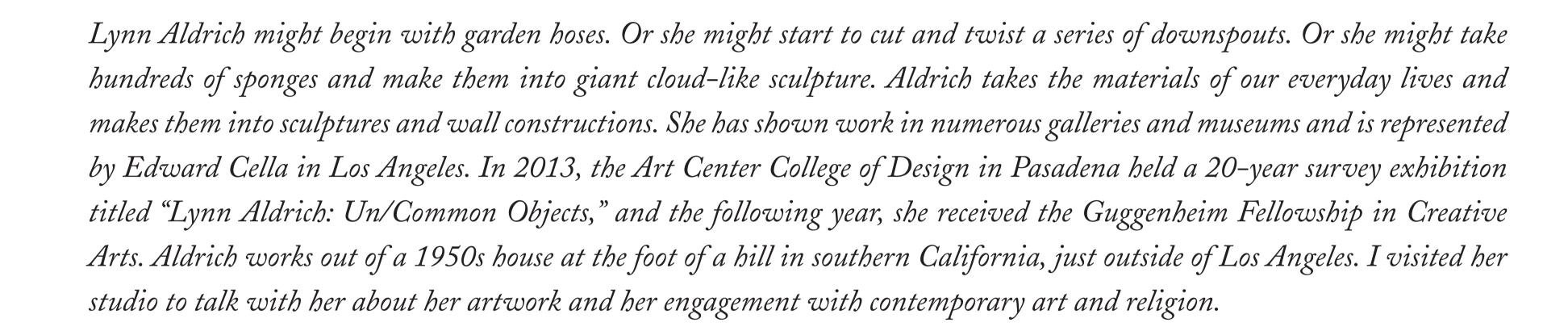
Lynn Aldrich
Rosy Future, site specific installation, 2015
Edward Cella Art and Architecture

"For me," says Aldrich, "these works celebrate light as knowledge—what, in a less secular age, was called faith is freely associated with a respect for scientific empiricism." From the expanse of the universe to the base products of everyday life, Aldrich's playful use of consumer objects straddles realms concrete and metaphysical.

—Rachel Will

An Interview with Lynn Aldrich

John Shorb



How does faith come into your practice as an artist?

When I went to grad school, I knew that my work was coming out of a deep place of faith. I was in my 30s, and I was ready to grapple with the nihilism and the materialism of our culture. And sure enough, it soon came up that there's no longer any transcendence, and there were a lot of other doors that were considered closed—you don't go there because it's not going to be anything of interest for today's art audience. But this turned out to be a great grad program for me. I was continually struggling with where my faith might enter the work. I think that's a good place to be. I don't think we should make it any easier on ourselves—we should just jump in and expect that challenge. I want to engage what's out there—this is the time and place in which I live. So I don't set out to have Christian content but I set out to be grounded in my worldview as a Christian. In addition, my art is informed by many other strong interests, including one in Western art history.

I want to look out at the world and engage with the reality of what exists. I think that includes aspects of theology—a parallel, transcendent, yet also real, universe, the Incarnation, the worth of human consciousness, the purpose of history. The extravagance of creation is called natural theology, I think—that all of nature is a text revealing God. I tend to think of art as a job. It's something that I work at and strive to do well, but it helps me just to think of it as an occupation that I happen to be trained in and that human beings have done in every age. I try not to romanticize it.

Yes, there's the notion that everything the artist touches might have value, or that the artist acts out of a higher blane.

Definitely, there can be this aura around the artist. It's connected to ideas about the Bohemian, someone who breaks social taboos, who lives outside the norm. And Conceptualism was a response to that—those artists wanted to bring art back down to earth after pure abstraction and introspective expressionism. That's one reason why I like Robert Smithson a lot. I love "Monuments of Passaic" where Smithson goes out and declares the various rusty industrial ruins along the river as today's grand monuments.

You use the word "hyperdesire" in your artist statement, calling it a "paradox at the core of religion and art practice." What is hyperdesire?

Hyperdesire is a longing that reaches past every other longing—absolutely nothing will satisfy it but God, himself. All desire drives us forward—we would be lost without it. But, hyperdesire causes us to form religions and to make art. Religion is a word that is out of favor today—it helps to recall that it originates from the same root that gives us the word ligament, Religion was not meant to be doctrine so much as a tie back to God, a cord of connection. I come from a literary background—I love words and text and the kind of thinking that you can explore through language. I'm indebted to C.S. Lewis for my conceptual framework for desire. Why create works of art? There's something that is longed for, a desire that reaches for fulfillment, even if the artist cannot or will

John Shorb is an artist living and working in Brooklyn, New York. He holds an M.Div. from Union Theological Seminary, and a B.A. from Carleton College. Here, he continues his editorial work for ARTS by interviewing practicing artists and curators for our "in the gallery" column.

OPPOSITE PAGE:

Water Feature, 2015

Galvanized steel downspouts,
exterior enamel. 51 x 84 x 57 inches

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Lynn

Aldrich



not name it as such. I love artists— the curious, the wounded, the weird. They're longing for something insightful or amazing to come out of their production that's going to touch a viewer with meaning beyond the material of the art itself. Even today with all the discussion of career, success, and fame or for what art can give you in terms of status, there's still the kernel in there of a longing for something that is spiritually and soulfully satisfying. I think that's also why people are so attracted to museums these days—they feel the itch of that longing.

You use materials found in our daily lives, especially more suburban lives, such as garden hoses and gutters, and you alter them to create an elevated sense of the material itself and the forms. You seem to both celebrate and critique our culture of consumerism and the functions of the objects you use. What draws you to these materials?

I want to begin with what is ordinary, marginal or ubiquitous, and see if through slight manipulation or accumulation or re-presentation in a different context, a kind of revelation will occur. Over time, I've used a wide range of materials, but really I'm very selective about which ones have the potential to remain obvious while naturally bearing transcendent metaphor. You could say that is inspired by the concept of the Incarnation.

Also, everything I make tends to be related to phenomena in the natural world—flora and fauna, light and water, the experience of nature and the wonder of the created cosmos. But I want to reference this through what is artificial, the overwhelming production of stuff we humans produce that is crowding out the wildness of our world. And I know that while I am critiquing this situation, I am immersed in its conflicts—this is my time to be alive on the planet. I know that the Christ I follow cares very much about social issues and justice. However, I spend my time making work that ends up primarily in the hands of the 1%. As an artist, you're more often than not creating luxury goods for the upper class. At least, art will usually be cared for by those who have the leisure to seek it out and think about it. A huge dilemma, always in the back of my mind. But Jesus also hung out with wealthy people, went to dinner parties, supplied the best wine at lavish weddings. He was at ease around every class of people and recognized that you could have riches but still experience poverty of the spirit.

Yet some of your work ends up in public . . .

Yes, of course there are works out in the public such as the art I did at a Metro Station in Los Angeles or the fountain I made at a shopping center. In this case, I explored the plaza in Pasadena where they invited me to make a work. It turned out this was the location of the Salvation Army at the turn of the century—a bronze plaque described the history. So I decided to make a fountain based on the wonderful old hymn, "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" which I imagined the Salvation Army band playing at the site. Actually, this public art received a favorable review in the *LA Times* where the writer went to the trouble to look up the lyrics and put them in his review.

And then in "Pools and Windows for the City of God" you use gold leaf.

Yes, that piece began with cutting out pages from a big coffee table book of designs for swimming pools in southern California. I used gold leaf paint to cover everything that wasn't a swimming pool or a window, so each page sort of invented itself as an abstraction if I followed my rule. Then I arranged them into a grid of water and light forms. I used gold leaf again on Audubon's book, the *Birds of America* where I covered everything in his prints except the birds' wings. Kind of like illuminated manuscript painting in reverse.

When I look at your work, I see a kind of commentary on our environmental situation.

There's definitely an ecological concern in the work. Sometimes the environmental urgency comes through more obviously like in the coral reef pieces, which are made out of cleaning implements. I'm trying to say, let's clean up our oceans! These pieces also celebrate the microcosm that is a coral reef, God's amazing extravagance, the gift of biodiversity. I want to bring an appreciation of that into my work. Also, there are quite a few pieces that connect to fresh water, which we now regard as an endangered resource. However, these works began with the contemplation of the biblical statements that regard Christ as the Water of Life. That is an incredibly simple yet complex and layered metaphor.



Opposite page:
Renew Your Reef, 2012
Brushes, sponges, scrubbers,
scouring pads, mop heads, plunger,
gloves, wood. 28 x 15 x 18 inches

page 42 • 27.1 (2015) ARTS ARTS 27.1 (2015) • page 43

artist profile

lynn aldrich

Artist Profile: Art Ltd November 6, 2015 - George Melrod



Parading their humble pedigree, the artworks of Los Angeles sculptor Lynn Aldrich can seem almost casual at first. Don't be fooled. Precisely composed out of largely ordinary materials, each of her sculptures is a self-contained statement of discovery and transcendence. In a sense, they could be almost called aspirational, not so much imposing a vision on mundane consumer items, but collaborating with them, allowing the intrinsic beauty already inside them to take form. Her 2013 retrospective survey at the Williamson Gallery at Art Center, in Pasadena, was called "Un/Common Objects." The works themselves suggested a cross between a Home Depot outlet and a botanical garden, where clusters of colorful garden hoses, or household plungers, dusters, and sponges erupt into bloom with almost biological fervor. Yet despite their humdrum origins, her works also have a purity and concision to them. "I've always had an affinity for marginalized materials. I kind of want to redeem them by some sort of craftsmanship that is very careful and deliberate," Aldrich says, adding with a laugh, "Found? Scavenged? I don't do that."

The pseudo-scientific taxonomies implied by her work are in fact deeply rooted. Aldrich's father was a research scientist and pathologist who worked with the Air Force. He was "very influential on me," she recalls, in ways "both scientific and poetic. Empirical science was the atmosphere I grew up in. I loved the ideals of the natural sciences." Born in Texas, she got a degree in English at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill before arriving at Art Center in Pasadena to pursue her MFA, initially as a painter. Among her teachers were Stephen Prina, who impressed her as a conceptual theorist, and Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe, who "pushed for the pleasure of the art object. So I had these two, almost opposing philosophies." Her practice today reflects this unlikely diversity of influences. "I don't have the classic sculpture education or background, but it forced me to be inventive."

Because her materials are often recognizable as common household and consumer items, they come with their own baggage: a resonance Aldrich clearly embraces. And yet, in stark contrast to Warhol's massproduced consumerist aesthetics, say, Aldrich's work are doggedly individual; each one is its own experiment. Despite their transformational yearnings, her objects could be called Darwinian descendents of the Duchampian readymade. "I think about Duchamp almost every day," she admits. The idea of "removing the object from its normal context, that is very intriguing to me." In recent works, she has adopted metal drainage downspouts, painting some of them subtle shades of blue while leaving others stark silver. In one piece, the blockish channels sprout trimly in a little grove; in another, they writhe and twist together like a bag of snakes. "They refer to water," she explains. "They already have this graceful, curved form. I exaggerate that, into allegoric twists and turns. But the spout itself has its own integrity... I'll manipulate it, tend to nudge it in some direction that it wants to go, but I don't alter its essence."

Her upcoming solo show at Edward Cella Art & Architecture in Los Angeles, titled "More Light Than Heat," promises to push Aldrich's vision into the realm of religious and celestial imagery. The droll title





suggests both the natural phenomenon of illumination, and the transmission of knowledge. In her small-but-airy studio, in a mid-century house on the edge of Glendale, various worksin-progress are arrayed neatly. Prominent among them are several large sculptures referencing cathedral-type rose windows. To Aldrich, the rose window is a symbol rich with meaning. "In the Middle Ages, they used it as an oculus... The original Light and Space art was stained glass windows. Painters were jealous, to have that luminous quality," she continues. The discussion winds though several Big Ideas, from the Judeo-Christian tradition, to the origins of Western science and skepticism, to the concept of a created cosmos, before weaving back to the iconic template of the rose window. "They were like a lens on the world," she says. "They looked through this and made connections to what it meant to be alive."

Although everything in the show relates to painting in some way, it is all still very much built. The show will feature a large sheetrock installation from which her main rose window piece will emerge; elsewhere, another rose window-like form floats ethereally, dispersed into layers of gray and lavender. Only partly tongue-in-check, Aldrich dubs the show's theme "Gothic Galactic." In her piece called The Universe in Captivity, she suspends an assortment of celestial-inspired discs, galaxies, and nebulae inside a tall, cylindrical birdcage. She describes the work as "seeking transcendence, trying to capture the universe, using craft puff balls, velvet, over-the-top clichéd materials." She adds, "Can one address monumentality in a small, encapsulated form? In a way, I'm mourning entropy." (Talking to her about the expanding universe, one cannot help recall the scene from "Annie Hall" when the psychologist attempts to assuage young Woody Allen, stating: "Alvy! The universe won't be expanding for billions of years!") Yet as with all Aldrich's work, no less than its implicit content, it's the work's sheer seductive presence that provokes contemplation. As Aldrich says, of sculpture itself: "It's a call to physicality, a reminder that you're experiencing life in a body."

—GEORGE MELROD

"Lynn Aldrich: More Light Than Heat" can be seen at Edward Cella Art & Architecture, in Los Angeles, October 24 – December 5, 2015. www.edwardcella.com

OPPOSITE TOP LEFT:
LYNN ALDRICH IN HER STUDIO

FAR LEFT:

"ROSY FUTURE (DETAIL)," 2015

OIL, FLASHE, DRYWALL PANELS, DRYWALL SCREWS,

TAR PAPER, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

ROSE WINDOW FORM IS 74" x 74" x 4"

LEFT:

"THE UNIVERSE IN CAPTIVITY," 2015
VELVET, TULLE, ACRYLIC, CRAFT PUFF BALLS,
STEEL WIRE, MIRROR, CAGE, 72" X 14" X 14"
PHOTOS: COURTESY EDWARD CELLA ART & ARCHITECTURE

72 art ltd - Nov / Dec 2015