

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rosy Keyser: Works on Paper

September 7 – November 9, 2019

Opening reception: Saturday, September 7, 6–8pm

Lora Reynolds is pleased to announce an exhibition of works on paper by Rosy Keyser—the artist’s second presentation at the gallery.

Rosy Keyser is best known for her large-scale paintings that combine oil or aluminum enamel, spray paint, pebbles, leaves, and dirt with shredded canvas, corrugated steel, fringe, beaded seat covers, and horse hair. She has rarely shown her smaller works on paper like the ones in this exhibition. They operate as microcosms of the paintings, experiments, and ways of helping her find connections between her wide-ranging forms, ideas, and media. They condense Keyser’s reckonings with stability and instability, everyday magic, fixity and infinity, life and death, bursts of wildness, and the “sensual interfacing” of her materials.

Keyser calls her studio an “untamed piece of turf,” a space where she tries to be present with her paintings, listen to them, respond, and let them show her places she could not have intentionally found. Her daily studio practice is an exercise in relinquishing full control and letting her work—and the world—wash over her.

Snakeskin has made its way into several of Keyser’s new collages. She was drawn to the hides (they were tanned, not found) because of the way their regular patterns break free of their own constraints—a rigid geometry that leads to fluidity. The skins’ individual scales are nearly identical in size and shape; they repeat in predictable fashion, but somehow create a larger pattern that undulates with a subtle irregularity. Snakeskins carry associations of danger and facing death, as well as the fragility and beauty of life—a Rorschach test from the desert that once carried a fatal dose of venom.

In *Tenderfoot’s Cross*, Keyser marries a column of two snakeskins with a square of taupe-colored corduroy. The fabric has been cut and sewn back together, but imperfectly, so some of its stripes intersect at angles they did not know when fresh off the loom. One of the skins has an unexpected band of pigment that could be melanin just as easily as spray paint. The other is not quite as wide and has a distinctly different pattern of repeating diamonds. The two skins are separated by a small slit in the underlying fabric.

Son of a Blacksmith also juxtaposes a manufactured material with an animal product. Corrugated cardboard recalls the rippling steel Keyser sometimes uses as a substrate in her larger works—both media point to the rhythms of lived experience, the body, its heartbeat and ribcage, intonations of speech. Smears of paint on top of the cardboard disrupt (without eradicating) its waves and regularity. A tuft of horsehair floats above the composition, but is tethered with a halter of enamel and bucks in response to its painted corral.

The cotton-candy pink in *Icarus's Mother* appears to be part of a dress from a magazine advertisement. The composition is bounded by an incomplete ring of sawdust, a material of particular interest to Keyser for its association with transformation. Sawdust is what remains when wood is cut, mulched, or otherwise pulverized—when it moves toward entropy. A material so fine it can be suspended in air, Keyser has nevertheless fixed it into a discrete shape, shifting it toward negentropy and order. A handful of daisies reach toward the sun from a strip of earth between the creased, pink dress and reconstituted powdered wood.

Binaries are of less interest to Keyser than continuums. She references order/chaos, female/male, vertical/horizontal, life/death et cetera to get at the possibilities of what is *between* the two poles. She describes the experience of wrestling with her own work as similar to the phase transitions between liquids and gasses: vaporization and condensation.

Rosy Keyser, born in 1974 in Baltimore, lives and works in New York City and the upstate hamlet of Medusa. She has participated in shows at Ballroom Marfa, Institute of Contemporary Art at Maine College of Art, Marguiles Collection (Miami), MASS MoCA (Massachusetts), Oakland University Art Gallery (Michigan), and White Columns (New York). Her work is in the collections of the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art (Denmark), Maxine & Stuart Frankel Foundation (Michigan), Portland Museum of Art, Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), and Zabłudowicz Collection (London).