

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Half-Light Periscope

September 17 - November 12, 2016

Opening reception: Saturday, September 17, 6-8 pm

Artist's talk at 7 pm

We are at deep play in the makeshift.
—Maggie Nelson, *The Argonauts*

Lora Reynolds is pleased to announce *Half-Light Periscope*, an exhibition of paintings by Rosy Keyser in the artist's first solo show at the gallery.

Rosy Keyser's paintings usually start with a vertical, rectangular, wooden stretcher about the width of her arm span. The crossbars—two vertical and two horizontal—break the frame up into a nine-part grid that Keyser contends with and breaks free of while experimenting with materials.

In much of her work, black and white house paints and spray paints bind sawdust and crushed obsidian to canvas, jute, curtains of string, and cardboard. Tree branches, beer cans—in this show, rope, suspenders, a tuft of horse hair—and other unexpected materials live in her compositions. The stretcher bars that support these dramas are often partially visible, as is the wall behind the painting.

Each of the paintings in this show incorporate sheets of seamed or corrugated steel. She forages for the metal in Medusa, a hamlet in upstate New York where she lives part-time. According to Keyser, "the steel had been left for decades in tangled piles to decay. I borrow it to resuscitate it." She finds many of the materials in her paintings this way, by keeping her eyes open as she navigates the world, considering everything she encounters a potential catalyst for painting-making.

The waves of corrugated steel evoke ideas about the rhythms of the human body: rib cages, heartbeats, inhaled, exhaled, epileptic seizures. Of equal importance are disruptions to these rhythms—corrugated steel rusts, becomes brittle, and breaks when exposed to the elements for long periods of time.

Keyser amplifies the vulnerability her materials imply with her improvisational approach to artmaking. She often uses a simple monoprinting process—applying paint to a board and using it as a stamp—so she is less in control than if she were using a brush directly on her paintings. She leaves her compositions outside to set—sometimes for a week or more—but also so the sun, wind, rain, and snow (as well as insects and animals passing by) can contribute to her work in unpredictable ways. "By letting things happen without overdetermination, I can get out of my own way: my judgments, painterly convention. A constant reshuffling of the deck followed by improvisation can lead one to the actual magic." Her studio practice is defined by an ongoing struggle with extreme uncertainty. Flux is a constant.

Another constant is the tension between the grid of Keyser's stretcher bars (or waves of corrugation)—measured, predictable, rhythmic, repeatable—and the wildness of Keyser's chance-based mark-making, which can be brash, fragile, funny, and violent. This tension is a metaphor for the struggle of being alive, the balance between knowledge and improvisation, the opposing desires to control and to believe. One relevant analogy is to the primitive special effects in George Méliès's early 20th-century films, like when a spaceship crash-landed into the eye of the Man in the Moon. We simultaneously want to know how the filmmaker produced such a clever illusion *and* to suspend disbelief long enough to tag along with Méliès on his trip to outer space.

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Born in 1974 in Baltimore, Rosy Keyser lives and works in Brooklyn and Medusa, New York. Her work has been exhibited at Ballroom Marfa, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art (Denmark), and Walker Art Center (Minneapolis). It is also included in the collections of the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Maxine and Stuart Frankel Foundation (Michigan), Portland Museum of Art (Oregon), Walker Art Center, and Zabłudowicz Collection (London).