

Devening Projects is pleased to invite you to *The Gatekeepers*, a solo show of recent paintings and works on paper by Rosalyn Schwartz. The exhibition opens Saturday, October 31st, and continues until December 12th, 2020. The gallery is open by appointment on Saturdays by scheduling a time via www.deveningprojects.com/appointments.

Rosalyn Schwartz is a painter deeply rooted in the histories and traditions of her discipline. She has spent years developing a complex language of color, light and space and makes work widely acknowledged for its individuality and distinction. When attention came for Schwartz early on, it was triggered by the highly nuanced, luminous and densely mysterious paintings she made in the 1980s and '90s. The work projected both a sense of visionary mysticism and foreboding prophesy. She envisaged and constructed environments that were nocturnal and swampy; a decision to enter these spaces was driven either by a strong sense of palpable desire or a morbid curiosity that what one might encounter would be less charming and more sinister. In either case, it was that sense of the unknown that kept one fully engaged. These vignettes were full of erotically charged and lusciously painted surfaces created with a skilled sense of color and value. The work was experienced not only with dexterous handling of her material but also by the primal need to know what was hidden underneath all of those layers.

Years later something happened; that something was the 2016 election. When the current president was elected, Schwartz reacted immediately with a strong sense of urgency. No longer was the slow evolution of sultry painting appropriate for a society that seemed to advocate misogyny, racism and white-male dominance. Instead, it was time to apply pressure with all the insistence and power necessary to the task. What quickly emerged was a series of portraits depicting assertive women shaped by a forceful presence of mind. This work celebrates the tenacity and individuality of women, while revealing an insistent commitment to doing so with the rawness of the emotions felt. Schwartz continues down this path today.

The work in *The Gatekeepers* reveals the influence of Picasso and Matisse—clearly a pair of towering icons—but also an interest in slightly less monumental but equally beloved painters like Bernard Buffet, Jean Dubuffet and Raoul Dufy. Schwartz's portraits and still lifes emerge out of forceful and confident drawing, are quickly developed with generous amounts of paint and then sometimes refigured with spray paint. These are reflections of an artist charged by a need to express the strength and integrity of her subjects while living with an administration driven by greed, apathy and power.

From his essay on Schwartz's recent paintings, the artist and critic Paul Krainak said:
"Gestural painting in Schwartz's hand is both form and content. A monument on sand made of illusive aspirations, unconditional love, and inadvertent transgressions, mature in the latest canvases. She nurtures a fluid interiority with few formal or conceptual restrictions. The work is performative and authorial, stemming from a life of studio experience adopting, modifying, and then spurning language intended to mediate a world where such spirited exploration and confidence is rare."

Schwartz has been making culture-changing paintings for most of her career. She is now at a point where the desire to please and seduce has been replaced with a need to declare and expose. The paintings in *The Gatekeepers* are reminders that painting—and art in general—can shift one's point of view and affect a misguided culture.

Schwartz has been exhibiting her work for the past 30 years, both nationally and internationally. She is the recipient of numerous grants, fellowships and awards, including a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Bush Fellowship and a McKnight Artist Fellowship. Major solo and group exhibitions include *A Brief History of Seduction* at the McNay Art Museum in San Antonio, Texas; and *Beauty Reigns: A Baroque Sensibility in Contemporary Painting* at the McNay and Akron (Ohio) Art Museum. A 20-year survey exhibition was held at the University of Missouri-St. Louis' Gallery 21 in 2010. Her work has been reviewed in *Art in America*, *Artforum* and *The New York Times*.

Schwartz received her BFA in painting from Washington University in St. Louis, and her MFA in painting from Fontbonne College, St. Louis. From 1988 to 2008, she served as professor of studio arts at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Previously, she taught at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and West Virginia University in Morgantown.