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ENTERTAINMENT

'Noon Has No Shadows'

Dual exhibitions recall the life and art of Rosemary Mayer

By Leah Schwartz

Downtown LA News Staff Writer

For anyone familiar with the feminist art movement, Rosemary Mayer is a staple name. Mayer's meteoric rise in the art world began in the '70s as a founding member of the A.I.R. Gallery, the first all-women artist cooperative gallery in the United States, cementing her as a fixture in the movement.

Even after her passing in 2014, Mayer's message of women's liberation and the fleeting nature of time still rings as true as it did 50 years ago. Since her death, Mayer's niece and nephew and the co-directors of her estate, Marie and Max Warsh, began organizing her archives and exhibiting her work, imparting her timeless messaging.

Mayer's work made its way to Los Angeles for the first time in early November, with showings at the Hannah Hoffman Gallery and Marc Selwyn Fine Art. The shows, titled "Noon Has No Shadows," run through Saturday, Dec. 23.

The sister exhibitions explore Mayer's work, spanning an array of media with themes of history, temporality and biography, and include new site-specific work and pieces that have not been displayed since they were made.

Much of Mayer's work is informed by history and those whose stories have been forgotten and disregarded. "(She) became interested in thinking about a



Late artist Rosemary Mayer's work is featured in dual shows at the Hannah Hoffman Gallery and Marc Selwyn Fine Art.

(Estate of Rosemary Mayer/Submitted)

whole history of women nobody knew about," Marie explained.

The multisite exhibition grants two different approaches to digesting Mayer's work. The Marc Selwyn Fine Art exhibit takes on a more traditional presentation, where two related bodies of Mayer's work from the late 1970s and early 1980s are displayed alongside each other. At the same time, the Han-

nah Hoffman Gallery's strategy is more nonlinear, presenting works crafted as early as 1971 through 1993, including a new work created by the Estate of Rosemary Mayer.

Both exhibitions highlight Mayer's penchant for implementing a wide swath of materials in her art, including rabbit-skin glue, fiberglass, fabric, wood, cheesecloth, paper and balloons. These rag-tag materials form delicate sculptures that belie a surprising sturdiness.

"She was interested in experimenting with materials to evoke this idea of presence and history and ephemerality," Marie said. "She was very interested in thinking about time and the passage of time." This fascination was in part influenced by the death of Mayer's parents when she was young, Marie explained.

The exhibit at Marc Selwyn Fine Art focuses on a series of drawings and un-

realized proposals for elaborate tents meant to celebrate the moon on the rooftops of city buildings paired with sculptures based on classical Greek vessels.

An early work from 1974, "Portae," an example of the sculptural form that Mayer is most known for, is on display at the Hannah Hoffman Gallery. The sculpture consists of an internal structure made from wood through which fiberglass and fabric are interwoven and contains references to the Mannerist period, a long-held interest of Mayer. A later piece from 1993, "Flotsam" — a wall sculpture made of rabbit-skin glue and cheesecloth — is also included in the exhibit along with a new work from Mayer's evolving series of ephemeral sculptures called "Ghosts."

Both sites include Mayer's drawings and watercolors, which exist in dialogue with her three-dimensional pieces but also as compelling works on their own. A set of drawings from 1971 depict Mayer's "impossible" fabric constructions — elaborate sculptures connected by multitudes of knots and loops. Many of her works on paper also employ text, which is seen throughout her work. The show's title comes from a series that couples images of beautiful flowers with darker and more evocative phrases.

The two shows coincided with a new transient sculpture constructed by the Estate of Rosemary Mayer, continuing Mayer's focus on impermanent and transitory objects. The sculpture is based on Mayer's work with balloons from 1977 to 1979 as part of a more extensive series called "Temporary Monuments." Five artists were invited to dedicate a weather balloon in tribute to an individual of their choosing during a daylong event preceding the exhibitions' openings to honor Mayer's lifelong attention to the passage of time and its connections between people, place and nature.



Feminist artist Rosemary Mayer's work is in Los Angeles for the first time with showings at the Hannah Hoffman Gallery and Marc Selwyn Fine Art.

(Estate of Rosemary Mayer/Submitted)

"Noon Has No Shadows"

WHEN: Through Saturday, Dec. 23

WHERE: Hannah Hoffman Gallery, 2504 W. Seventh Street, Second Floor, Los Angeles; and Marc Selwyn Fine Art, 9953 S. Santa Monica Boulevard, Beverly Hills

COST: Free

INFO: www.hannahhoffman.la and www.marcselwynfineart.com