

PRESS RELEASE

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MARTHA ROSLER: BELOW THE SURFACE OPENS AT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM DEC 12

Inaugural 100K Prize winner's photomontage series *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* to be exhibited in its entirety

December 12, 2015–July 4, 2016

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SEATTLE, WA - The Seattle Art Museum presents *Martha Rosler: Below the Surface*, an exhibition featuring several videos and two photomontage series: *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* (1967-72) and a new series of the same title made in 2003-08. An award-winning artist, feminist, political activist, and theorist, Rosler's work takes aim at intertwined structures and strictures of social, economic, and political concerns such as gender norms, labor issues, consumer society, urban development, and media culture.

In the first series, *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home* (1967-72), Rosler reveals the disconnect between the televised carnage of the Vietnam War and the domestic dreams of an upwardly mobile, predominantly white middle class. Rosler circulated the photomontages as flyers and in alternative press publications—examples of which will also be on view—a context that speaks to the artist's aims and the urgency of the issues at stake.

Decades later, the American invasion of Iraq prompted a related body of work, *House Beautiful: Bringing the War Home, New Series* (2003-08), which takes into account a changed technological and media landscape—the 24-hour news cycle facilitated by the rise of the internet and social media. The new series reflects the ever greater gap between a hedonistic culture of consumption and spectacularized images of war in high definition—while remaining a society that repeats the same warlike errors.

Three videos that touch on a number of related themes will also be on view: *A budding gourmet* (1974), *Martha Rosler Reads Vogue* (1982), and *If It's Too Bad To Be True, It Could Be DISINFORMATION* (1985).

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The exhibition was organized in collaboration with the artist and The New Foundation Seattle, which recently named Rosler as the inaugural recipient of its 100K Prize, a biennial award presented to an influential, U.S.-based woman artist. Accompanying the 100K Prize is *Housing Is a Human Right*, a full year of exhibitions and public programming exploring issues related to housing, neighborhoods, and displacement through Rosler's work. The first exhibition in the series, Rosler's *If You Lived Here Still*, opens in late January 2016 at The New Foundation Seattle.

"Martha Rosler is one of today's most influential contemporary artists," says Chiyo Ishikawa, SAM's Susan Brotman Deputy Director for Art and Curator of European Painting and Sculpture. "We're excited to be a part of the incredible series of events throughout the city that The New Foundation Seattle has brought together; our show acts as a sort of historical starting place for understanding Rosler's decades of inquisitive work."

Born in Brooklyn, New York, Martha Rosler graduated from Brooklyn College in 1965 and then from the University of California in San Diego in 1974, a city with a large military presence at a time when heightened tensions over Vietnam roiled the United States and the world, along with domestic cultural upheavals over women's rights.

"Martha Rosler is an extraordinary artist with an acute social and political consciousness," says Catharina Manchanda, SAM's Jon & Mary Shirley Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art. "She deploys the shock of the montage with a good dose of black humor, startling us out of our habitual complacency. The political issues of the day may be changing, but she reminds us that the power structures and narratives created by ourselves and the media machinery need constant scrutiny."

The artist will travel to Seattle in late January 2016.

Image credits: *Makeup/Hands Up*, c. 1967-72, Martha Rosler, American, photomontage, 20 x 24 in. Courtesy of the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, NY. *Red Stripe Kitchen*, c. 1967-72, Martha Rosler, American, photomontage, 20 x 24 in. Courtesy of the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, NY. *House Beautiful: Giacometti*, c. 1967-72, Martha Rosler, American, photomontage, 20 x 24 in. Courtesy of the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, NY. *Back Garden*, 2004, Martha Rosler, American, photomontage, 20 x 24 in. Courtesy of the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, NY. *Election (Lynndie)*, 2004, Martha Rosler, American, photomontage, 20 x 24 in. Courtesy of the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, NY. *Vanitas*, 2004, Martha Rosler, American, photomontage, 24 x 20 in. Courtesy of the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, NY.

ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Robert Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and reopened as the Asian Art Museum. SAM's desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a "museum without walls," free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM's collection of more than 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures and time periods.