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Jet Set Saturdays: Nancy Rubins at Gagosian

June 2010



NANCY RUBINS *Skins, Structures, Landmasses* June 3 - July 9, 2010 (Main Gallery, South)
Photo by: Erich Koyama

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Nancy Rubins hasn't shown in Los Angeles since 2001. Her highly anticipated show at Gagosian gallery opened June 3rd to a crowd of art world glitterati. Among the attendees were the actor Julian Sands, ArtTeamLA's director Jane Glassman, critic Andrew Berardini, and Andrea Feldman Falcione (former curator for the Ovitz Family collection), just to name a few. I myself was directed to the show by a winsome art handler who assured me that Rubins' work and her persona exceed the imagination. Art handlers are the cocktail waitresses of the art world and, although held captive by the servile nature of their profession, they are often privy to more access and information than the most well-schooled critics, collectors and journalists. And, darling, you know I can't resist an articulate boy on a ladder with a tool. A-hem! Fortunately for me, this handsome handyman was right on the money.

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NANCY RUBINS *Drawing*, 2010 Graphine on rag paper, 59 1/4 x 51 1/2 inches (150.5 x 130.8 cm) RUBIN 2010.0004 2010.D.01
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Rubins' work is elegant, muscular, and energetic. It deals with some essential elements of process — the primordial squishing and layering of material. The work astonishes with its powerful accumulation of the elemental *en masse*. Whether laying down the graphite with a pencil on large disjointed bits of crumpled watercolor paper or stacking boats, Rubins attacks her work systematically and intuitively, eliciting the power and energy of repetitive action. Rubins utilizes a post-modern formalism that adheres rigidly to structures regardless of their fluidity via her commitment to the processes and materials she explores.



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Gallery says: *"Although these drawings are physically light, unframed works on paper, they read as leaden reliefs whose abstract planes engage with the walls, their undulations and folds projecting outward. As simple and direct as they are in terms of materials, they are complex in terms of process and the palpable accumulations of the time and energy required to produce them. Consequently Rubins describes her drawings as "batteries" or containers storing energy."*



NANCY RUBINS Drawing, 2005 Graphite on rag paper, 81 x 116 x 9 inches (205.7 x 294.6 x 22.9 cm) RUBIN 2005.0004 2005.D.02

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Rubins' graphite pieces are some of the most accomplished and innovative works on paper I've had the privilege to view. The work illusionistically captures the elemental nature of lead — referencing the pencil itself as a tool worthy of exploration. The drawings are real metallic forms, their protuberances and jagged edges loom like the hulls of ships. Spatially dynamic, the leaden paper tips like a Serra sculpture magically thrust into space. Powerful and primitive, Rubins changes the scale of human experience. I am a little less excited by the presentation of Rubins' sculptural boat installation, primarily because I feel the work needs to be viewed in an exterior space in order to be fully appreciated. I would love nothing more than to fall asleep on the grass looking through the interior of one of Rubins' sculptures. This Jetsetter can imagine a June afternoon in Sagaponack, listening to the staccato of soft rain on aluminum...falling asleep under the oblique sky cut into devastating negative shapes by the overlapping boats. Ahhhh...Summer in the city...time to venture out for a stroll through Debs Park or perhaps a walk in the surf on Zuma Beach./

This post was contributed by [Mary Anna Pomonis](#)

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