

GAGOSIAN GALLERY



Art

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Our Friend Liquid Metal,
Spiral Ragusso, 2013

Q&A: Nancy Rubins

The artist transforms childhood-related items into sculptures about the transient nature of materials. By **Howard Halle**

Appliances, mobile homes, aircraft fuselages and engines, canoes and water heaters—these are some of the materials Nancy Rubins has used to create her sculptures over more than 30 years, pieces whose ambition of scale and suspension into gravity-defying forms never fail to impress. She's rifled through sources from Goodwill to aircraft boneyards in the Mojave Desert to find her "palette," which, for her latest project, consists of recycled playground equipment, part of a new series titled "Our Friend Fluid Metal." Rubins recently spoke to *Time Out New York* from her studio and home in Los Angeles to expound upon aluminum and to explain that her work is unexplainable.

Your latest piece is made out of scores of these spring-mounted playground rides for kids in the shape of animals and toys, but

what does the "fluid metal" in your title refer to?

They're made of aluminum, which is cheaper to recycle than to it is to mine, and when I bought them, they were probably an inch away from being melted down to be made into something else. And it started making me think about this aluminum and how I was finding it in this fluid state, between what it was and what it could be in the future.

When you use water heaters or airplane parts for a piece, are they meant to evoke metaphorical associations?



Nancy Rubins
in her studio.

Not at all. I'm always trying to draw the abstraction from things, like these springy doodads, which are sort of Pop-ish or camp; I'm trying to squeeze that Pop Art quality out of them.

So why do you choose the items that you do?

I'm making something I want to see, that pleases my eye. I look for materials that are really poignant, that are compelling to me. And if I could tell you why they were compelling to me, I wouldn't be a visual artist—I'd be a poet.

"Our Friend Fluid Metal" opens Thu 17 at Gagosian Gallery (see Chelsea).

UP IN THE AIR
Rubins often defies gravity



MATTRESSES AND CAKES, 1993

This sculpture is made of the titular elements: The mattresses come from the Salvation Army, and the baked goods are replaced whenever the piece is installed in a new location.



WAS: BUILDING AND AIRPLANE PARTS, SAN DIEGO, 1991–NOW: AIRPLANE AND BUILDING, GRAZ, 2003

Rubins found the materials here at a Mojave Desert aircraft boneyard.



MONOCHROME FOR PARIS, 2012

Rubins also used canoes for a piece for Lincoln Center, and has said she doesn't like being in boats.

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