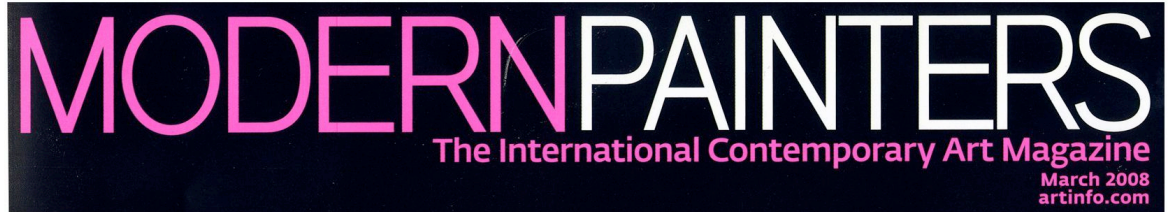
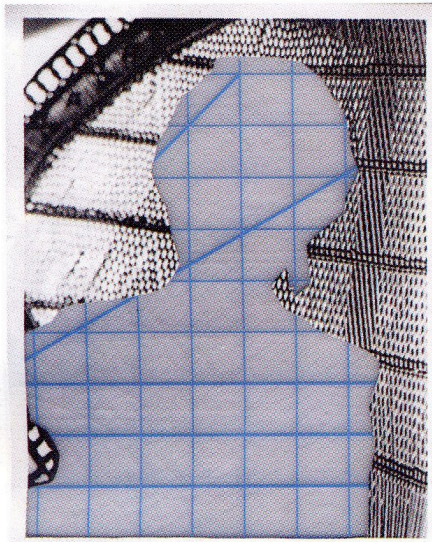


Allan, Stacey. "Introducing Amanda Ross-Ho," *Modern Painters*, March 2008, pp. 46-48, 95.



Introducing



AMANDA ROSS-HO, *PEACOCK*, 2007. ARCHIVAL LIGHT-JET PRINT, 52 X 40 IN. COURTESY CHERRY AND MARTIN, LOS ANGELES.

AMANDA ROSS-HO's work is in the group exhibitions "Nina in Position," through March 29 at Artists Space, New York (artistspace.org); the 2008 Whitney Biennial, March 6–June 1 at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (whitney.org); "Chinaman's Chance," March 14–June 17 at the Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, CA (pacificasiamuseum.org); and the Armory Show, March 27–30 in New York (thearmoryshow.com). She will have a solo show in September at Cherry and Martin, Los Angeles (cherryandmartin.com).

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INSTALLATION VIEW OF AMANDA ROSS-HO'S WORK AT THE NADA ART FAIR, MIAMI, DECEMBER 2007. COURTESY CHERRY AND MARTIN, LOS ANGELES. FACING PAGE: THE ARTIST IN HER STUDIO, LOS ANGELES, DECEMBER 2007.

INTRODUCING

AMANDA ROSS-HO

TEXT STACEY ALLAN PORTRAIT JEFF MINTON

"WE CAN'T GET ENOUGH, BECAUSE THERE'S TOO MUCH." In this statement for her nihilistically titled 2007 exhibition "Nothin Fuckin Matters," at Cherry and Martin in Los Angeles, Amanda Ross-Ho articulates a condition of cultural excess, in which freedom has become synonymous with consumer choice. In the face of a seemingly endless supply of desirable goods, we still can't get no satisfaction. The LA-based artist's work is most often discussed in terms of infinity and limitation, the invisible line at which it is revealed that we can in fact shop until we drop and eat all we can possibly eat, though there's plenty left on the table. It's not surprising, then, that she has an affinity for gift baskets, the excessive, bountiful, cellophaned kind (overflowing but self-contained) that are given as gifts during the holidays and as tokens of welcome at hotels. They appear as xeroxed images in collages and as empty woven vessels in her mixed-media installations; and, eschewing fruit and muffins for studio detritus, household items, plants, the Yellow Pages, and random commercial products, she sometimes makes her own. *Absolutely Everything* (2005) is an early example, an arrangement of these objects unattractively sealed in plastic shrink-wrap on a sawhorse-supported studio table, which offers only a small sampler of what it promises.

In cheeky response to this underwhelming condition of excess, much of Ross-Ho's work uses negative space, with punk-inspired processes of destruction and removal (a type of consumption) standing in as the perfect foil for artistic creation. Cut snowflakes, starbursts, lace doilies, stencils, and macramé patterns appear and reappear in her work, a nod to craft's importance in the feminist art movement of the 1970s, and the movement's subversion of male-dominated, Eurocentric histories of art that ghettoized vernacular and domestic forms and drew strict distinctions between "high" and "low." At the Roski School of Fine Arts, University of Southern California, where she received an MFA in sculpture in 2006, Ross-Ho began making dramatically enlarged black doilies from a coarsely constructed homemade lace of strategically cut and thickly painted canvas drop cloth. Though they are nearly seven feet in diameter and often hung somewhat ponderously from leaning slabs of drywall measuring four by eight feet, there is nothing predictably delicate or feminine about them. They are, however, evocative of Eva Hesse's dramatic incorporation of graphic line and pattern into three-dimensional form. Later variations on this series, based on macramé patterns, were exhibited last year in "Distinctive Messengers," at House of Campari in LA; in some of the more serpentine works, it is hard not to

MITCHELL-INNES & NASH

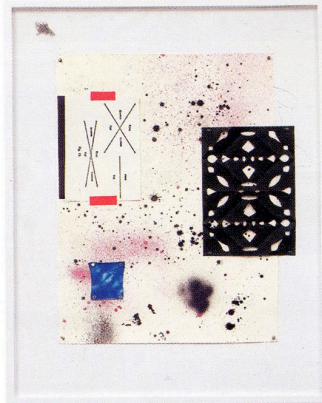
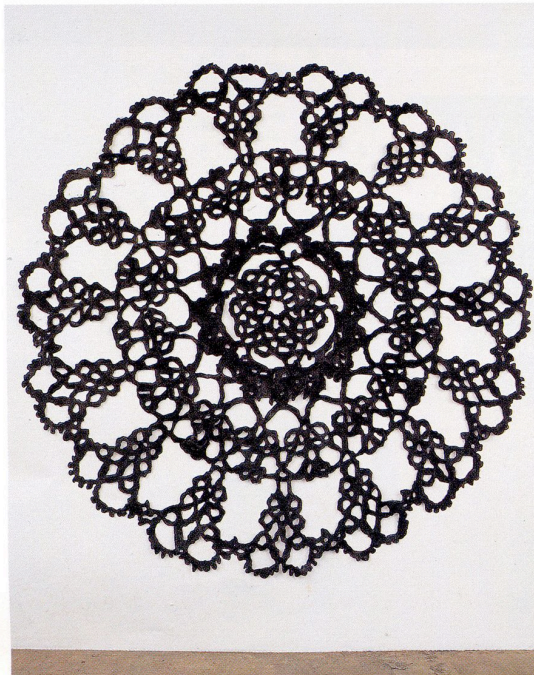
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CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: *BLACK WIDOW #7*, 2007, ACRYLIC ON CUT CANVAS, 84 IN (IN DIAMETER). PHOTO: ROBERT WEDEMAYER. *UNTITLED STILL LIFE (ROSSCHICHI)*, 2007, SHEETROCK, XEROX, PAPER, ACRYLIC, GRAPHITE, FABRIC, AND PINS, 41 X 32 IN. PHOTO: ROBERT WEDEMAYER. COURTESY CHERRY AND MARTIN, LOS ANGELES. *ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING* (DETAIL), 2005, TERRARIUM, SAWHORSES, LIVE PLANTS, FOUND OBJECTS, AND SHRINK-WRAP, 72 X 60 X 48 IN. COURTESY THE ARTIST.

be viscerally reminded of Hesse's *Lao-coön* (1966), itself a riff on geometric, masculine Minimalism.

The snowflake, doily, and macramé patterns are also the basis for a number of works titled *Gran-Abertura* (2006), heroic monoliths of intricately incised white drywall that look like negative images of the above-mentioned wall hangings. Here, the patterns are written into the walls as precisely cut voids that allow the light to pass through, with the drywall becoming the object instead of the support. For Ross-Ho's

carded at week's end, along with the infinite yards of barely used convention center carpeting, packing materials, paper espresso cups, and plastic champagne flutes.

Translated from Spanish, *gran-abertura* means "great opening"; significantly, *apertura* is also a political term used to describe the liberalization and "opening" of a culture, particularly in the aftermath of a totalitarian regime. It might be simplistic to think that Ross-Ho intends to metaphorically facilitate an escape

to be filled with a regional or thematic sampling of this and that? If it were wrapped in cellophane and bows, would we want to take it home?

Ross-Ho's use of appropriated consumer images has prompted comparisons to Richard Prince and the late-1970s "Pictures" generation, but her concern with the politics of decoration and hierarchical modes of display aligns her work with that of the moment's more peripheral figures—especially Louise Lawler and Allan McCollum, arguably more

artfully arrayed on a leaning slab of white commercial Peg-Board—compositionally brings to mind Lawler's early arrangements of work by other gallery artists, as well as a shared concern with artistic labor and product display. Also at play in Ross-Ho's use of handcraft and the image of the snowflake, of which no two are ever alike, is the idea of uniqueness, that something rare and precious is inherently valuable—a conceit that has long been central to McCollum's practice and is eloquently expressed in *Over Ten Thousand Individual Works* (1987/91), his abundant installation of unique cast Hydrocal bits.

Writing about these artists in his 1982 essay "Subversive Signs," art historian Hal Foster described a paradigm in which "the artist becomes a manipulator of signs more than a producer of art objects, and the viewer an active reader of messages." Almost 30 years later this quotation seems to apply aptly to Ross-Ho and the somewhat-cryptic messages she transmits via her mix-and-match engagement with craft, domestic imagery, teenage punk ideology, and art historical pastiche. She tills the cultural soil, not so much unearthing loaded images and decorative forms (they are already abundant and unavoidable) as harvesting, deconstructing, and arranging them for display. In her removal of material and content, the opening of space, and her unsentimental, impersonal, and unimpassioned use of vernacular materials, she creates a sense of emptiness, despite the fecundity and seemingly limitless expansion of the bounds of contemporary art. With so much on the table, abundance heightens the hunger for more.

In cheeky response to excess, much of Ross-Ho's work uses negative space, with punk-inspired processes of destruction and removal standing in as the perfect foil for artistic creation.

most recent exhibition, at the NADA art fair last December, several panels of drywall were machine-cut in LA from an enlarged paper snowflake pattern and shipped to Miami for installation. The snowflake-patterned walls framed the temporary, makeshift booth, allowing symbolic transparency of the exhibition's framework by way of the literal exposure of wall studs, and were presumably dis-

from the totalitarian white cube or open a space for abject forms to work their way in, concepts that now seem outdated. It could more likely be a goof on anything-goes pluralism. If the gallery was once thought of as a pristine white vessel, an isolation "cell" for autonomous art (as famously articulated by Brian O'Doherty in *Inside the White Cube*), can we now imagine it as an empty gift basket waiting

vanguard artists whose works continue to investigate the institutional system that frames the production, presentation, and consumption of works of art. Specifically, Ross-Ho's *Untitled Arrangement* (2006), a presentation of symbolic, and possibly autobiographical, items—a black hooded sweatshirt, a pair of Vans sneakers with painted soles, a raw-canvas rag and a xeroxed copy of a lace doily

For more information on Amanda Ross-Ho, turn to Index, p. 94.