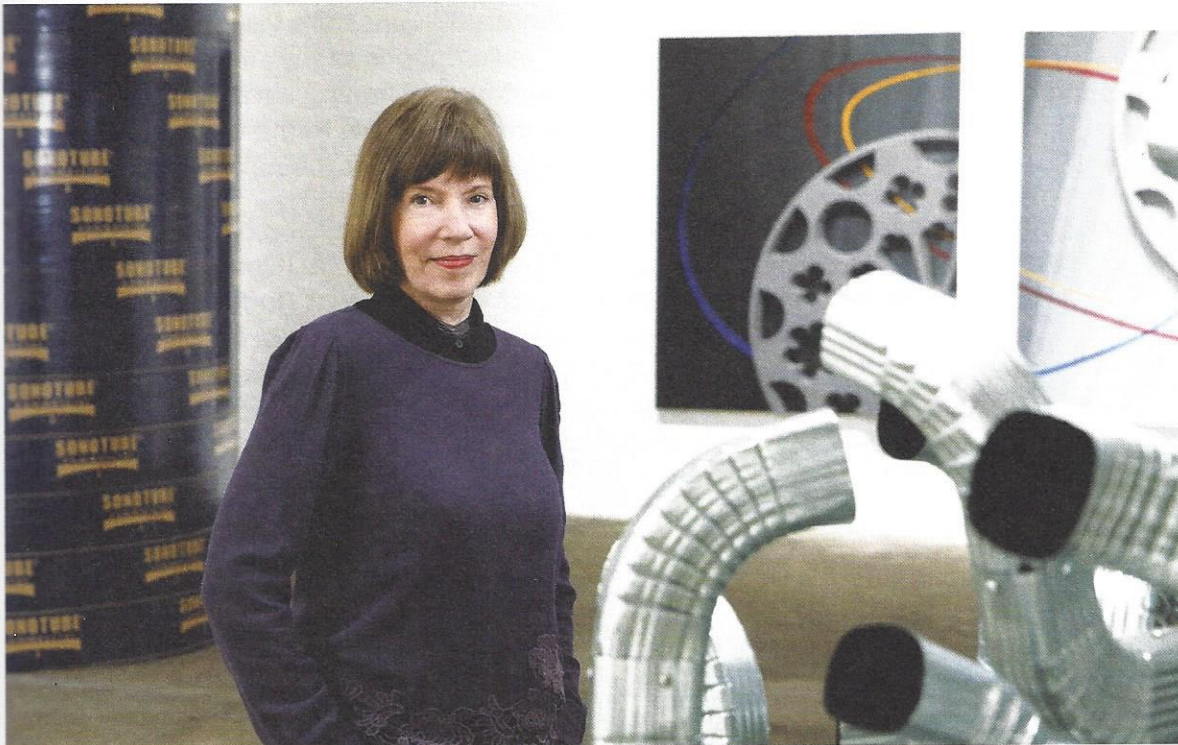


Romantic and Realist: Lynn Aldrich

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Lynn Aldrich (MFA 86 Art) doesn't seem to be able to make up her mind. She wants objects—hard, cheap, common objects—and ideas as well. And the ideas can get big—philosophical, even celestial: She wants her art to be vehicles for them, even if the materials she uses come from 99 Cents Only stores and Office Depots.

She loves minimalism and what she calls “the ethics of minimalism: that you should not be deceitful about your materials.” But she goes beyond minimalist orthodoxy: That’s why a stack of paper plates can turn into an ancient Greek column, or an array of rainspouts can become something that seems to belong in Renaissance Italy. Speaking to Aldrich, you realize she lives in the world and on the astral plane simultaneously.

It may be difficult for Aldrich to reconcile her dialectical imagination. But the winner in this struggle between object and idea, head and heart, Apollo and Dionysus, is the curious person who encounters Aldrich’s work. Howard Fox, the emeritus LACMA curator who has known Aldrich for decades, describes her work as a place “where something thoughtful and reflective is going on.”

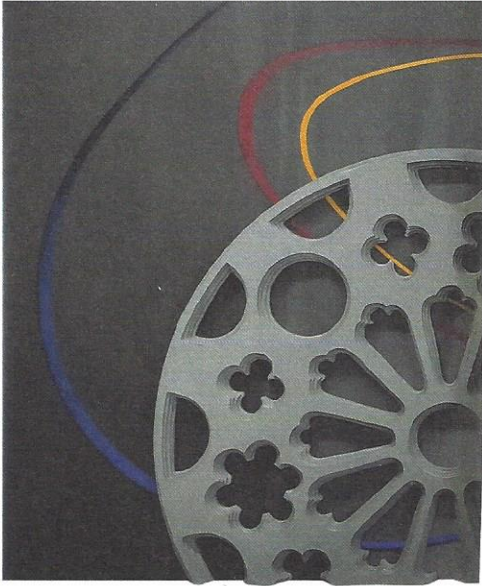
Aldrich is not unaware of her divided soul. “I have two sides, the realist and the romantic—I can’t shake it.”

Some of her complex ambitions come from her formative years. Aldrich was born in East Texas and grew up a military brat whose family moved every few years. Her early interests were the sciences and literature. As an adult, in the early 1970s she moved with her husband to the Glendale hills. About a decade later, she enrolled at ArtCenter and studied with Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe. There, she began to find her direction.

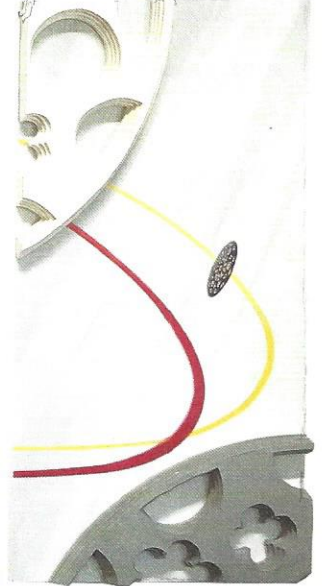
“I was lucky enough to be at a school—ArtCenter—that was aware of beauty, of the physical nature of things,” Aldrich says. She had been captivated by the conceptual art of John Baldessari. But concepts weren’t enough—“I wanted to make something beautiful, something to look at.” The program later helped launch her: “You have models, people who’ve done this before you.”

She says now, standing in a ranch house she describes as “Midcentury Modest”: “My art is not about me psychologically or about my identity; it’s about my outward gaze on the world. I think artists share that with scientists.”

Today, she says, “Artists can either jump in and address the digital world or step back and say, ‘Look at this.’” Chances are, she’ll do both.



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1
Lynn Aldrich, photographed at her *O, Magnify* exhibition at L.A.'s DENK Gallery this past summer

2
Broken Rose, 2019
Oil paint, acrylic paint and sheet rock on three wood panels

3
Pet Rescue for the Anthropocene, 2017
Fake fur swatches, steel chain leash

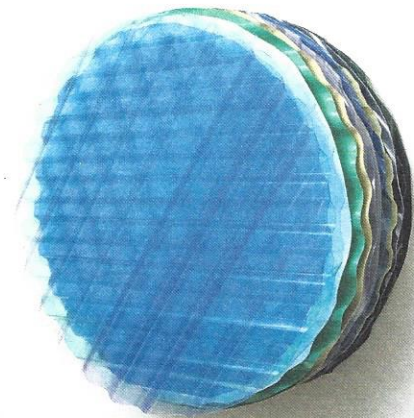
4
Water Tangle, 2018
Galvanized steel, acrylic paint

5
Porthole, 2019
Hand-cut plastic roofing panels on acrylic support

Images 2-5 courtesy of DENK Gallery



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