

FORTNIGHT INSTITUTE

60 East 4th St. NYC

JANE KAPLOWITZ

RSVP Jane Rosenblum (1977-2018)

Curated by Alison M. Gingeras

29 November 2018 – January 6, 2019

Opening Wednesday, November 28, 6-8pm



Jane Kaplowitz by Rob Wynne

Fortnight Institute is pleased to present *RSVP Jane Rosenblum (1977-2018)*, Jane Kaplowitz's first solo exhibition in nineteen years. Curated by Alison M. Gingeras, *RSVP Jane Rosenblum* explores the dual identity of an artist who has transformed her role as a consummate art world insider into the conceptual substance of her work.

For over five decades, Kaplowitz was part of the artistic and social bedrock of the New York art world. Yet paradoxically her practice as an artist has fallen off the radar. *RSVP Jane Rosenblum* feature works from the entire span of Kaplowitz's oeuvre (1977-present), and will include more than thirty-five works (paintings, works on paper) hung floor to ceiling in Fortnight Institute's modest East Village storefront gallery.

Better known by her married name, Jane took her husband's last name Rosenblum when they wed in 1978. Robert Rosenblum (1927-2006) was a deeply influential art historian and curator who was celebrated for his irreverence. Otherwise, she goes by her maiden name, Jane Kaplowitz, whenever exhibiting her own work. Over the course of their three-decade long partnership, Robert and Jane Rosenblum regularly opened their art-filled West Village home to an array of artists, intellectuals, poets and downtown bohemians. Together they hosted frequent dinner parties—their gatherings were considered a generous, informal, multi-generational “salon.” In her dual role as a patron of the avant-garde and as a largely private artist, Kaplowitz frequently deployed the guests at her legendary gatherings as protagonists in her art.

While she self-deprecatingly pronounces herself as a “super fan girl of the art world,” Kaplowitz's work reveals itself as a sly sociology of the matrixes of power, ritual and intellectual orthodoxies of the contemporary art system.

Her paintings often use fragments of text from invitations cards, art dinner menus and other flotsam and jetsam that surrounds art exhibitions, openings and other cultural correspondence. Kaplowitz's strategic use of this ephemera as source material acts as a diary of her art life but also



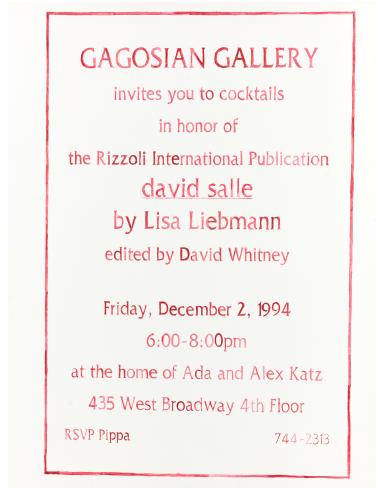
The Windsors, 2014.

frames the semiotics of power and cultural capital. As the wife of Robert Rosenblum and through her own circle of artist peers, Kaplowitz from a very young age was ingratiated into the most illustrious circles of artists and thinkers. She has kept an extensive archive of she and her husband's travels and immersive experiences in the high cultural milieu, turning this ephemera into the very substance of her art. Not only do these mementos historicize these given events, the streams of proper names from the most famous of artists to those forgotten cult figures of the downtown *culturati* are enshrined in her works. When read as a whole, Kaplowitz's oeuvre is both a lifelong self-portrait and an ethnographic record of other lives lived, careers lost, and the passing of tastes within this rarefied social bubble of the art world.

Born in Brooklyn in 1949, Kaplowitz began her formal training at Pratt Institute where she received a B.F.A. in 1971 and continued her graduate studies at the Art Institute of Chicago where she received her M.F.A. in 1973. Amongst her first exhibitions was a show at the Drawing Center in 1978, where she exhibited small drawings of art in interiors, witty parodies of Modernism that paired fragments of famous masterpieces by artists such as Picasso and Frank Stella with contemporary furniture and decorative motifs. Prefiguring the work of Pictures Generation artist Louise Lawler, some examples of this early body of work will be included in the Fortnight Institute show.

Kaplowitz exhibited extensively until 1999 and then gradually retreated from exhibiting in commercial galleries, yet she continued to make work in private. Acting as a "secret historian," Kaplowitz's work is soaked in the underground that permeates the art world.

The trope of homo-couples runs throughout her work—not only are the protagonists in her text paintings often members of the cultural elite such as in her acrylic on canvas portrait of *Jack Bankowsky and Diego Cortez* (1993), Kaplowitz queers all of her subjects—whether in a painting of *Britney and Madonna* (2003) making out or in a drawing of seagulls *These Birds are Lesbians!* (2015). This milieu was a fixture of the Rosenblum's unofficial salon which irreverently mashed up establishment luminaries with the next generation of cultural trouble makers. On any given night, one was assured to meet interesting people of the art community.



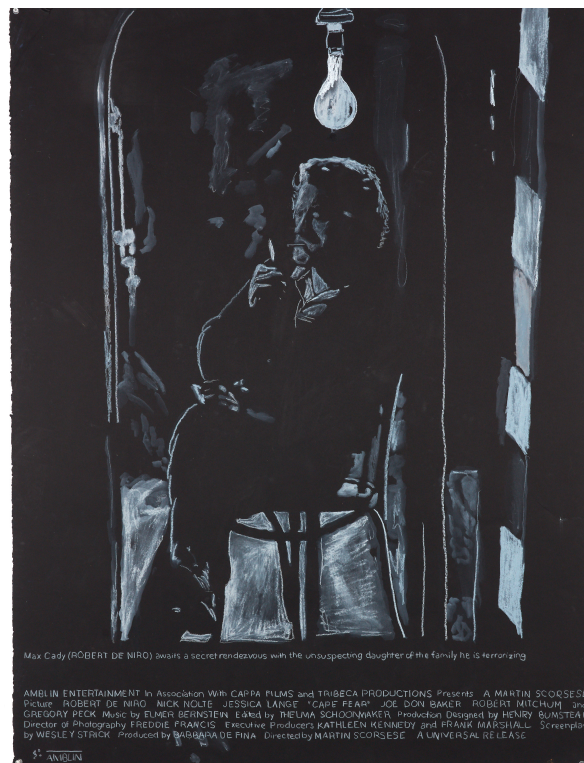
At first glance, one painting seems like a deadpan reproduction of an invitation to a fancy art book party at Gagosian Gallery. Blown up to a monumental scale and transferred to canvas, this work might at first seem like nothing more than conceptual name dropping. Yet imbedded in Kaplowitz's choice of found material is a deeper story of her own personal investments, friendships with forgotten figures, and an analysis of how cultural capital is built. In this instance, Kaplowitz chose that invitation because it involved Lisa Liebmenn, a writer and her dear friend, who wrote about the artist David Salle, who's celebratory dinner was held at artist's Alex Katz loft—each reference pays homage to the tribal, incestuous and perverse social structures of the art world's hermetic social system.

Gagosian Gallery/ David Salle/ Lisa Liebmenn, 1994.

In another series of works, Kaplowitz deploys self-effacing humor and fantasy to construct a series of veiled self-portraits. In a large suite of works on paper, she draws out her over-identification with the butch onscreen persona of Robert de Niro, detailed renderings of her alter-ego focus on iconic film stills taken from *Taxi Driver* and *Cape Fear*. She also reveals herself in works based on from dinner party shopping lists that become paintings; her doctor's prescriptions for anxiety medication also is an important theme for drawings. When dabbling in celebrity culture, Kaplowitz creates portraits of her eclectic private pantheon of famous figures (Snoop Dogg, David Bowie, Madonna etc.)—yet hers are not merely gratuitous pop gestures. She dryly “queers” all that she touches—while poking fun at the art world’s official canon of high seriousness.

As the life partner of a specialist of 18th and 19th century art, Kaplowitz’s oeuvre is steeped in historical reference. Religion and the search for God is an ongoing trope in her oeuvre; this theme is irreverently suggested by a self-portrait Kaplowitz made in 2010 *Queer Middle Ages*. Her religiously-tinged works make reference to a collective devotion to and “belief in art” that federates the disparate subcultures that overlap to form “the art world.” For all of its rational secularity, the art world fetishizes its relics, elevates and sanctifies certain personas, generates its own set value system, and preaches socio-political progressivism: the sum of Kaplowitz’s oeuvre implicitly proclaims art as an alternative religion.

Fortnight Institute, Heinzfeller Nileisist & Frank Haines will co-publish a zine to accompany the exhibition with texts by Alison M. Gingeras and Miciah Hussey. It will feature extensive reproduction of Jane Kaplowitz’s archives. A conversation with Kaplowitz, Gingeras and the co-publisher Frank Haines will be announced during the course of the exhibition.



Cape Fear, 1998