

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

For Immediate Release

KAY ROSEN: H IS FOR HOUSE March 5 to September 4, 2017

The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum is pleased to present *H Is for House*, Kay Rosen's first solo museum exhibition in the northeast in almost twenty years. This exhibition will premiere a series of new works, all painted in black and white, which the artist has completed since 2015.

Rosen's text-based works use formalism, linguistics, and humor to reveal content that is hidden within both the structural nature of written language and the ways in which meaning can be generated through the manipulation of text. The exhibition will include fourteen works on paper, as well as two monumental wall paintings, the largest incorporating two walls and covering over 700 square feet. Rosen approaches written language as structure, with words and letterforms functioning as building blocks, and where, through unusual typographic arrangements, words and phrases can embody the thing they are describing. Rosen has created these new wall paintings to play off the interior space of the Museum, using the existing architecture to amplify each work's content. Similarly, the vertical "architecture" of the paper works sets up a space for the text to play off, guiding meaning, letter orientation and size, and number of lines. Turning architect Louis Sullivan's dictum that "form follows function" on its head, Rosen's works take the forms inherent in text to create new functions for the written word.

The title *H Is for House* references both the alphabet—the raw material of Rosen's work—and the architectural nature of the works included in the exhibition. The vertical portrait format relates both to the figure and the pull of gravity, and the atypical disruptions of the text have the curious quality of effecting bodily orientation, with the viewer's eyes being put into the position of twisting to accommodate the off-kilter compositions. Related to, but different from the genre of concrete poetry, Rosen's wordplays creatively reinforce the relationship between form and meaning.

Kay Rosen (b. 1943, Corpus Christi, TX) studied languages and linguistics at Newcomb College at Tulane University and received her MA in linguistics from Northwestern University. Realizing that the aspects of language that most interested her needed to be expressed visually, for the past four decades Rosen has channeled her exploration of language through color, scale, art materials, and non-linear composition. Her work is included in many public collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Art Institute of Chicago; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Rosen currently lives and works in Gary, IN, and New York, and teaches at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

A full-color, soft-cover scholarly publication will be available during the exhibition.

Organized by Richard Klein, exhibitions director, The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum.

For press inquiries, please contact Emily Devoe at 203.438.4519 x 140, or edevoe@aldrichart.org

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Kay Rosen, *Head over Heels*, 2015
(to be realized as a wall painting in The Aldrich's lobby). Courtesy of the artist and Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York.

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