

Elizabeth Alexander and Patty Carroll

Domestic Demise

Gallery One

February 15 – April 11, 2020

Gallery Guide

The home is the primary space where gender norms are formed and performed. The domestic sphere has long been portrayed as a feminine space where women are expected to play the role of wife and mother. While women may rule the home, this space is often understood to exist outside the societal power structures of commerce, politics and industry. Conversely, feminist discourse often dismisses the powerful role women hold within the domestic sphere as submissive or weak. Photographer Patty Carroll and sculptor Elizabeth Alexander dissect the complexities of feminine domesticity through images of humor, excess, and decay. Both artists present a challenge to the singular ideal of a sacred home so often portrayed in popular culture, while still embracing the aesthetics of domestic spaces. These artists are able to exemplify their power as women by turning the manufactured and politicized image of home on its head and reclaiming it as their own.

Patty Carroll's highly staged, kitschy images highlight the ways that home has become a space where individuality is lost in a sea of consumption. Her images prompt viewers to consider the toll that the traditional American dream has on female identity, presenting anonymous female figures in various states of demise through their own material excess.

Through highly detailed and repetitive processes, Elizabeth Alexander highlights the imperfections that lay beneath the facade so often presented in formal domestic spaces. For Alexander, the finished work and the process to create it, functions as an unveiling that reveals the turmoil, labor, and struggle that underlies the spaces we so desperately present as seamless sanctuaries.

Together both artists present outlandish and grotesque visions of domesticity that work to remind us that there is no such thing as a perfect home.

Special Performance Friday, April 3, 7-9pm

Artist Biographies

Patty Carroll has her Bachelor of Fine Art from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana in Graphic Design, and her Master of Science in Photography from the Institute of Design at the Illinois Institute of Technology, Chicago. Carroll was Adjunct Full Professor at School of the Art Institute of Chicago until 2014. She has participated in numerous group and one-person exhibitions, and has work in several museums internationally. She is the photographic author of 5 books and her work is also included in various Photography anthologies. She was the recipient of an Artist Fellowship Grant from the Illinois Arts Council, and has had various International artist residencies. Her photographs have won various awards in international competitions, and been featured in various print magazines and online blogs including Huffington Post, Feature Shoot, The British Journal of Photography, and The Cut.

Elizabeth Alexander earned her Master of Fine Art in Sculpture from the Cranbrook Academy, and her Bachelor of Fine Art from Massachusetts College of Art, where she discovered the complex nature of dissecting objects of nostalgia. Alexander's work has recently been featured in the Burke Prize Finalist exhibition at the Museum of Art and Design, State of the art at the Crystal Bridges Museum, and will be featured in Paper Routes, Women to Watch 2020 at the National Museum of Women in the Arts and is included in permanent collections at the Crystal Bridges Museum in Bentonville, Arkansas and the Mint Museum in Charlotte, North Carolina. She is currently an Associate Professor at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.