

# CULTURED

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—Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn



# FEIGNING DOMESTICITY

*Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn, the dealer behind the project space Salon 94, is participating in Design Miami/ for the first time, featuring work by Rick Owens and Betty Woodman. Carol Kino tries to figure out what makes her sensibility tick.*

PORTRAIT BY DOUGLAS FRIEDMAN

**It was a glorious spring afternoon** in New York, and Salon 94, the jewel-box-like project space that the gallerist Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn runs in her home, was humming with activity. Upstairs, in the reception rooms where Greenberg Rohatyn hosts dinners after openings, her youngest daughter was coloring with a nanny. Downstairs, in the sleek ground-floor office, an assistant buzzed about, assembling slides for a lecture Greenberg Rohatyn was giving at Vassar the next day and organizing her trip to Paris the following week.

But Greenberg Rohatyn herself was entirely focused on the gallery space, a light-filled room where she had installed a preview of her upcoming booth at Design Miami/, where she will pair the massive primitivist vessels of Betty Woodman with the giant-sized Brutalist furniture of Rick Owens. (Greenberg Rohatyn introduced Owens' furniture to the U.S. two years ago; she represents him jointly with Rodman Primack.)

"I always build fairs in a really precise way," Greenberg Rohatyn explains, "because I use them as exhibitions." And because this will be her first time showing at Design Miami/, she has decided to zero in on what Art Basel has always meant to her—the meeting point of contemporary and modern. "I wanted to riff and play on that idea," she says, "and these were the two artists I thought could handle it the best."

Take an idea and riff on it: that pretty much describes Greenberg Rohatyn's overall approach to showing art. Raised in St. Louis, the daughter

of an art dealer and an art writer, she grew up in a house filled with furniture by Diego Giacometti and Donald Judd and where artists were always passing through. "A lot of my getting to know artists was at home rather than in the gallery," she explains. "They would stay with us, and we would talk." Even as a child, she was fascinated by legendary salonistes like Gertrude Stein and Florine Stettheimer.

Surprisingly, though, Greenberg Rohatyn spent her early years as a curator and art consultant working on splashy public projects, including *Casino 2001*, an exhibition with 60 artists that took place in Ghent, Belgium, and a show by Damien Hirst, among others, in a terminal at John F. Kennedy International Airport.

But after marrying the financier Nicolas Rohatyn and having her first child, she realized things had to change. "I had to figure out a way to do what I loved doing, but in a practical manner where I could also be a mom and a wife." She found the answer in Salon 94, a concept she dreamed up while she and her husband were renovating a former orphanage on East 94th Street with the architect Rafael Viñoly.

The space, which opened in 2003 with a horror-movie-inspired installation by the video artist Aida Ruilova, manages to strike a savvy balance between the intimacy of a home and the more expansive possibilities of a traditional white cube. With its curtain wall made from curved panes of glass and its elegant burlled walnut staircase, Salon 94 does a good job of



Jeanne Greenberg Rohatyn in front of *Holy Holy* by David Benjamin Sherry. She's flanked by Rick Owens' petrified wood *Curial* chair from his new collection, and Betty Woodman's *On the Way to Mexico* vase.







Rick Owens' *Pavane for a Dead Princess*, 2010.

*"I remember the floors having to be tested for the weight of the two-ton alabaster bed."*  
*—Rick Owens*

"feigning domesticity," as Greenberg Rohatyn put it, while also being large enough to accommodate "the scale of art that is being made today."

Greenberg Rohatyn soon developed a fondness for working with artists who specialize in straddling boundaries themselves, such as Paula Hayes, known for her terrariums and landscape designs, and Marilyn Minter, celebrated for paintings that uncover the gritty side of fashion photography. Gradually, the idea of working with contemporary designers seemed like a natural evolution. "I like flipping from one thing to another," she says.

In the last five years, Greenberg Rohatyn has opened two more galleries—Salon 94 Freemans, on the Lower East Side, and Salon 94 Bowery, next door to the New Museum. She was also a judge on the first season of

Bravo's art-world reality show, *Work of Art: The Next Great Artist*. But the heart of everything she does remains the gallery in her home—and showing there seems to work for her artists, too.

"The whole show became like an installation," Woodman says of her first exhibition there last spring. "Simply the choreography of the way the visitor came into the house and moved through it was dramatic." Owens fondly recalls the sense of drama surrounding his own installation. "I remember the floors having to be tested for the weight of the two-ton alabaster bed," he says of the show, wherein he famously recreated his Paris bedroom.

As for the Design Miami/ booth, Owens thinks it's a great idea. "I'm a Betty Woodman fan, so there's probably a bit of her in my stuff. I'm tickled pink just to be showing in the same space."





Rick Owens' *Tomb Stag* bench, pictured in an 18th-century Swiss House Museum.