

# THE *PRESENT IS FEMALE*

Carolina Alvarez-Mathies works in concert with Deborah Scott to bring an all-women show to Park House.

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Six female artists take the spotlight in the *Fall/Winter Art Rotation* at Park House through April 2021. Exploring concepts of deconstruction, Carolina Alvarez-Mathies selected eight works from Park House member collections, including one from her own; club cofounders Deborah and John Scott; gallerist Erin Cluley and her husband Tearlach Hutcheson, a film industry executive; Nancy C. Rogers; Mark Giambrone; and Lisa and John Runyon, who curated the permanent collection at Park House.

Deborah Scott enlisted Alvarez-Mathies about a year ago. “We were so lucky that Carolina had just arrived in Dallas for her new position as deputy director of the Dallas Contemporary. She was the perfect fit, with a worldly background and a Texas history, having graduated from TCU. She is so knowledgeable and connected in the art world, but this was her first solo curatorial undertaking.”

Alvarez-Mathies who had just moved to Dallas after a decade in New York City and then a stint in Zürich, translated Scott’s original all-female-artists directive, saying she learned to “trust my eye and instinct—even with being new at this—and most definitely to assert my voice as a Latina in contemporary art, to take up space unapologetically.”

Beautifully displayed in the entry corridor, Sara Cardona’s *Circular Thinking* is the first work members see when they step off the elevator and look to the right. “My interest in collage began recently, in 2015, during my tenure at El Museo del Barrio in New York City,” Alvarez-Mathies explained. “Rocio Aranda-Alvarado curated a group exhibition called *Cut N’ Mix*, which portrayed artists experimenting with collage in new ways. I think I visited that show every day it was on view. When I first saw *Circular Thinking* at Erin Cluley Gallery, my reaction was immediate—I was drawn to

Deborah Scott and Carolina Alvarez-Mathies with two untitled works by Michelle Grabner. Loaned by Mark Giambrone.



Lorna Simpson, *Darkened Staircase*, 2015, ink and acrylic on gessoed aluminum and fiberglass board, 67 x 50 in. Loaned by Nancy C. Rogers

Sara's analog cut-and-paste method that had been transformed into a larger, almost sculptural, piece. The work was in its crate—it had just come back from the San Antonio Museum of Art, where it was part of *Texas Women: A New History of Abstract Art*." Alvarez-Mathies not only included the work in the show, she also acquired it for her own collection. "Sara is such a natural fit for my collection—it's mainly the work of Latin American artists, both based in Latin America and in its diaspora."

Scott is equally drawn to Cardona's work and purchased a piece for her lake house. "John and I have now commissioned Sara to create a nearly 14-foot work of a very irregular shape." The Scotts also loaned Marilyn Minter's *Deluge* of strappy, jeweled silver-platform shoes. "I have been a big fan of Minter's work since first seeing a show of her lips and jewels series back in 2006 at Baldwin Gallery in Aspen. We own a small piece from that show. I'm also a huge fan of her shoe photography—gorgeous stilettos stomping in grimy puddles—the opposite of what anyone would want to do with these beautiful shoes. Jimmy Choo hired her to do an edgy ad campaign for them when my friend was their head of marketing," says Deborah

Directly across, viewers see Lorna Simpson's exquisite black-and-white *Darkened Staircase*, of a woman ascending a flight of steps that's in great contrast to the colorful and frenetic *Circular Thinking*. "I see Sara's and Lorna's works as being in conversation with Michelle Grabner's two untitled circular pieces as well as Katherine Bradford's *White Wave*," Alvarez-Mathies muses. "That entire entry hall is an exchange between four women who, through their practice, investigate and critique the human condition—often through notions of gender, consciousness, identity, waste, repetition and habit to name a few."

Erin Cluley, a former deputy director at Dallas Contemporary, and her husband Tearlach Hutcheson mounted two works by Taylor Barnes from their own collection: *Should I Tell Em* and *Twitch*. Featuring details of the human form—face, arms and torso—these are perhaps the most intimate in the exhibition. Says Alvarez-Mathies, "Taylor's work is so powerful, it's the kind of work that invites us to pause and listen—there is a delicate beauty to the work with the choice of materials she works with, like cloth and charcoal. I am drawn to her investigation of identity, of existing in the world as a woman of color. I admire the strength and courage that exists in the work—the way the two pieces of cloth are sewn across the woman's body on *Should I Tell Em* is so striking."

Deborah Scott felt strongly about presenting a show dedicated to women artists at Park House. "I think we have all recently looked at our collections, both individual collectors and institutions, and determined that the majority of our collections are disproportionately comprised of male artists. I definitely see my friends looking to add more diversity to their own collections." She adds, "Art is such a big part of the club experience, but it almost blends into the overall decor. Rotating the art with dramatic new installations is an exciting change for our members and their guests, but it is actually our staff who really appreciate the new shows. They live with the art every day, and they were thrilled to have a fresh show installed."

The exhibition aims to provoke investigation rather than presumption as members walk through these corridors. The exhibited works are decidedly in conversation with one another, their meaning, if there is one, not readily apparent. The work offers a glimpse like a film still or a moment in time, and Alvarez-Mathies encourages viewers to consider their many and often conflicting meanings. She says, "The most rewarding aspect was definitely to dive deeper into the works of each of the artists I selected and form new points of connection between their practice and works." **P**



Installation view; Marilyn Minter, *Deluge*, 30 x 24 in. Loaned by Deborah & John Scott; From left: Taylor Barnes, *Should I Tell Em?*, 2020, sewing and charcoal on cloth, 32.5 x 30 in. Loaned by Erin Cluley and Tearlach Hutcheson; Taylor Barnes, *Twitch*, sewing and charcoal on layered cloth, 40 x 29.5 in. Loaned by Park House Collection.