

rachel uffner

ARTFORUM

NEW YORK

Sara Greenberger Rafferty

RACHEL UFFNER GALLERY

170 Suffolk Street

September 12 - October 28



Sara Greenberger Rafferty, *Untitled* (detail), 2018, ink-jet-printed vinyl, grommets, 10 x 35'.

Dramatically unfurling down the entryway of this gallery, a thirty-five-foot-long, untitled ink-jet-on-vinyl piece (all works 2018) hangs from grommets, on which Sara Greenberger Rafferty seems to have dumped the contents of her Google Drive. Dotted with rectangular icons ordered roughly by color, the work reveals Rafferty's preoccupations with various kinds of staging. In it are a

number of selfies the artist took in a Dior shirt that pays homage to art historian Linda Nochlin—emblazoned across it is “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists,” the title of Nochlin’s famous 1971 essay—alongside images of film stills, makeup swatches, Color-Aid tests, and comediennes such as Kathy Griffin.

“Testing” is the title and overarching concept for Rafferty’s solo show. Using kiln-formed glass for the first time, Rafferty prints predigital archival material that touches on female stardom, school exams, and photographic processing. A native of Chicago, Rafferty’s affinity for comedy has evolved over the years from slapstick sculptures to analyses of performance gestures. It is tempting to compare Rafferty’s “Testing” works to the early flatbed-scan “joke” works of Lucie Stahl, which included the German artist’s handwritten notes. But even with

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intrusions of the personal, Rafferty's concerns remain structural.

Pieces such as *Exterior (University of Michigan Extension)* feature direct exposures of images onto ballistic and bulletproof plastic—the works' substrates allude to gritty urban storefronts. Rafferty's text-heavy works, however, pack a bigger conceptual punch. In *The Law*, she reproduces a page detailing Abbie Hoffman's trial. In it, the notorious Yippie argues that his wearing of the American flag should be legal, like the garments of comic Phyllis Diller. *Her Taxes* appropriates an excerpt from a *Vanity Fair* article, published before the 2016 election, about Donald Trump's undisclosed tax returns. Rafferty zeroes in on an anecdote about a women's-lib era celebrity legal skirmish: that of comedienne Carol Burnett, who successfully fought the IRS to write off her evening gowns as business expenses in the 1960s.

— Wendy Vogel