



**THE OTHERS**  
FEB 10–MAY 29, 2017 | ROCKFORD ART MUSEUM



## EXHIBITION TEACHER GUIDE

sponsored by Anne + David Boccignone and Rockford Area Arts Council

selections from the  
FRANCIS &  
JUNE SPIEZER  
COLLECTION

# THE OTHERS

FEB 10 –  
MAY 29  
2017

## INTRODUCTION

*The Others* explores 50 iconic selections by 44 seminal artists from the 200-piece Francis and June Spiezer Collection of Rockford Art Museum, critically acclaimed as the most significant collection of Chicago art that exists today. The Spiezers also amassed a brilliant grouping of studio glass from around the world.

Francis and June Spiezer were known for their passionate support of (usually emerging) artists. "Let other people who live in other cities support their galleries; we have to support ours," she said in a 2003 interview. "Francis and I both knew we would buy primarily from Chicago galleries and Chicago artists because we could talk to them. When I see Josh Garber, he knows who we are and we know who he is, no matter how famous he gets. Even with Ed Paschke, every time he'd see us he'd say, 'I know that *Red Sweeney* lives in your house.' ... I love these artists and I love the artwork."

**On view are 32 paintings, prints, and drawings** by Ed Paschke, Ray Yoshida, Art Green, Gladys Nilsson, Jim Nutt, Karl Wirsum, Nicolas Africano, Stephen Warde Anderson, Walter E. Andersons, Phyllis Bramson, Roger Brown, Susanne Doremus, Sarah Barnhart Fields, Julia Fish, Mark Sumner Forth, Michelle Grabner, Steven Hudson, Richard Hull, Jackie Kazarian, Mike Lash, Jim Lutes, Jacqueline Moses, Lorraine Peltz, Dan Ramirez, Scott Reeder, Kate Rosen, Rebecca Shore, Hollis Sigler, and Maria Tomasula; **and 18 glass, metal and ceramic sculptures** by Kéké Cribbs, Tom Czarnopys, Josh Garber, David Gilhooly, Nina Levy, John Littleton and Kate Vogel, Joseph Litzenberger, Joel Philip Myers, Holly Rittenhouse, Les Sandelman, Lino Tagliapietra, Tony Tasset, Janusz Walentynowicz, and Karen Zoot Wolfe.

*The Others* is an ongoing memorial to Francis and June Spiezer whose spirited generosity and passion for art and artists—and providing accessibility to both, through entrusting their superb collection to this museum—remain immeasurable. Let others support their others, as June said; *these are Francis and June's "others."*

### Carrie Johnson

Curator, Rockford Art Museum

*The Others* is organized by Rockford Art Museum, curated by RAM Curator Carrie Johnson. This exhibition and its related educational programming are sponsored by Anne and David Boccignone, and partially supported by a Community Arts Access Grant from Rockford Area Arts Council, by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency, and by the Armer Ahlstrand Charitable Foundation. RAM education programs are supported in part by Women's Art Board.

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## EXHIBITION VOCABULARY

**ABSTRACTION.** Freedom from representational qualities in art.

**ANAGRAM.** A word, phrase, or name formed by rearranging the letters of another, such as *cinema*, formed from *iceman*.

**BLOWN GLASS.** Glassware shaped by forcing air into a ball of molten glass.

**BIOGRAPHICAL.** Dealing with a particular person's life.

**GRISAILLE.** A method of painting in gray monochrome, typically to imitate sculpture. May be used as its own technique, or as an underpainting in preparation for layering color over it.

**HOMOPHONE.** A word that is pronounced the same as another word but differs in meaning, and may differ in spelling, e.g., *new* and *knew*.

**LITHOGRAPHY.** The process of printing from a flat surface treated so as to repel the ink except where it is required for printing.

**SCULPTURE.** The art of making two- or three-dimensional representative or abstract forms, especially by carving stone or wood or by casting metal or plaster.

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## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### ACTIVITY #1 | WORD PLAY

Interested in language and its ability to construct meaning, artist Kay Rosen focuses on words and the power of arrangement in her art. She explores words' construction, and how and why certain sounds have particular meanings, all while acknowledging the humor and emotion that a combination of letters can evoke. In short, Rosen lets her work speak for itself.

#### **Materials**

white paper  
letter stencils  
rulers  
pencils  
markers  
paint



ABOVE: Kay Rosen, *Cut Out*, 1993, lithograph. Collection Rockford Art Museum, Illinois. Gift of Francis and June Spiezer. © Kay Rosen. On view in *The Others*.

Have students examine Rosen's work (see following page for examples) and engage with the words – read them, sound them out, say them out loud. Think about the different ways in which the words and phrases included in her work can be interpreted.

Think about common words in your daily language. Do the letters in the word contain other words within them, or can the letters be rearranged to spell something else entirely? Does the word have a homophone (e.g., new and knew)? Rosen plays with the English language, using anagrams (e.g., cinema and iceman) and homophones – come up with your own arrangement of words and their letters, and toy around with ways they can be arranged and rearranged to have meaning or humor to you.

Use letter stencils or take care in writing and/or drawing letters in an arrangement on a plain white background – use a ruler to keep your lines straight and clean. Consider the style of the text and the colors you use, but let your words speak for themselves!

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© Kay Rosen. *Migration*, 2005. Courtesy of the artist..



© Kay Rosen. *E. Rigby*, 2012. Courtesy of the artist..

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## CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### ACTIVITY #2 | VIEW FROM ABOVE



Julia Fish, *Great Divide*, 1986, Collection Rockford Art Museum, Illinois. Gift of Francis and June Spiezer. © Julia Fish. On view in *The Others*.

Artist Julia Fish paints compositions that approach abstraction, yet are grounded in human experience. Her home, studio and the landscape serve as inspiration for her simple yet moving works. Fish's art leaves room for the viewer's interpretation based on his or her own experiences, as the quote from collector June Spiezer illustrates:

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"It doesn't matter what the artist had in mind; it's how the work affects you. When I saw this by Julia, I thought of myself. This is like a child, maybe me, in a carriage, looking up the stoop. And here is somebody flying a kite, with the sky behind it, with clouds. It has a good feeling. Childhood. I grew up in a Polish neighborhood; everybody had steps like this going up to the house.

So when I met Julia, I said, "I love this! It gives me such a good feeling! Ah, youth, here I am!" She said, "No, no. You don't understand! You're not looking up, you're looking *down*. This is a landscape. you're in an airplane! This is a road. This is—no, no!"

But whatever she thought [laughs], I couldn't help it. I still look at it, and think of the kid in the carriage. I'm glad she told me. It gave me a good feeling, and I bought it."

—June Spiezer, 2004

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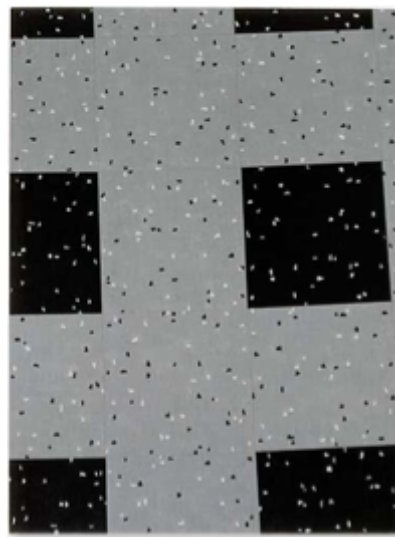
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## **Materials**

paper, canvas or board  
paint of choice  
chalk pastels  
pencil

Have students view examples of Fish's work (below). What do they see upon first glance? What alternative visual meanings could they find?

Have students consider scenes that have meaning in their lives: a bedroom, a backyard, a park, a classroom. Now, encourage students to envision this scene from a distance, such as from an airplane. How different would it look? Like Fish, have students negotiate a balance between abstraction and reference by determining what elements would make the imagery distinct while allowing for multiple understandings and blurred meanings. Once students complete their individual projects, host a "critique" in which classmates attempt to decipher the images from their own perspectives.



© Julia Fish. Courtesy of the artist. LEFT *Bloom*, 1989. RIGHT *Floor II*, 1994.

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## WEBSITES

Rockford Art Museum

[www.rockfordartmuseum.org](http://www.rockfordartmuseum.org)

Kay Rosen

[www.kayrosen.com](http://www.kayrosen.com)

Julia Fish

<http://juliafish.com>