

# SouthamptonPatch

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## Dorothea Rockburne Retrospective Opens at the Parrish

Solo show spans more than 40 years of an artist adhering to an independent view of creativity



Narcissus, 1985, by Dorothea Rockburne. Credit: Courtesy of The Parrish Art Museum

Math, diverse materials and brash colors are part of the mix in "Dorothea Rockburne: In My Mind's Eye," an exhibition that opened Saturday at the Parrish Art Museum. The solo show offers a sprawling collection of art spanning 43 years of artmaking.

Rockburne's works are in collections held by the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and others.

"In My Mind's Eye" is the first career retrospective of the Canadian-born artist who climbed the artworld ranks in America after studying at Black Mountain College in Ashville, North Carolina, according to the Parrish. The exhibition features more than 50 artworks that reflect Rockburne's attraction to diverse materials and compositions.

These include the floor installation "Intersection," made of seminal crude oil, paper, plastic and chipboard. "Tropical Tan" features four panels of wrinkle finish paint on steel. "Scalar" is crude oil, paper and nails on chipboard.

Artworks can include gold leaf, varnish, cup grease, India ink, Mylar tape and other material, according to the exhibition catalog, published by the Parrish. The 160-page catalog contains three essays and 52 color illustrations.

Rockburne has followed a steadfast course of "no compromise" in her artmaking, museum director Terrie Sultan wrote in the introduction. This was reinforced by Stephane Aquin in her

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catalog essay describing Rockburne's early exposure to art theory battles in Canada and to creative mavericks at Black Mountain College.

Some art in the show features brush and vivid colors in sharp geometric shapes. Other works are subdued including a series of white folded paper.

Underlying the art is philosophies from mathematics, science, ancient Egypt and Greece, Renaissance art, astronomy and archeology. Math has been a frequent component of her work, said art historian Dr. David Anfam during a panel discussion held to launch the exhibition.

Philosophical complexities aside, viewers don't have to grasp math equations to understand the artwork, Rockburne said during the panel. The art can be enjoyed at whatever level the viewer wishes, she said.

Panelists included Anfam, Rockburne and Dr. Alicia G. Longwell, the Parrish Art Museum's Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman chief curator and organizer of the exhibition.

Museum Director Terrie Sultan opened the panel by revealing a Rockburne exhibition topped the list of Longwell's wish list for the Parrish.

Separately, Longwell explained that she became a fan of Rockburne's while working at the Museum of Modern Art during the exhibition organization of Eight Contemporary Artists around 35 years ago.

"Her [Rockburne's] commitment and passion for art were palpable and as I have followed her career over the years, I have grown more and more in awe of her significant contribution to the art of our time and convinced that a fuller look at the work would be a revelation," commented Longwell. **PAT ROGERS**

The exhibition is on view through Aug. 14. The show then travels to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. It will be exhibited there from Nov. 3, 2011 to Jan. 29, 2012. A lecture on Black Mountain College and Rockburne's experience will be held at the Parrish on July 14 at 6 p.m.