

ARTFORUM

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Kay Rosen

ALEXANDER GRAY ASSOCIATES

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Kay Rosen, *Triumph Over Trump (Blue Over Yellow)*, 2017, Acryla gouache on watercolor paper, 22 1/2 x 30 1/2".

A deranged band of outlaws has taken over the US administration, and this is increasingly the case all over the world. Their collective nihilism is the reigning new world disorder. So how about some fun to counter their skeptical notions of truth, a little humor to keep us afloat while they propagate alternative facts, and some of *our* word games? For nearly five decades, Kay Rosen's work has tested the limits of language, and her latest exhibition continues this by gathering recent pieces that walk a fine line between protest paraphernalia and linguistic innovation—the invention and introduction of new terms into the grammar of normative life that feminists have always excelled at.

Directly across from the entrance to this show is the mighty *Scared and Sad*, 2018, reading "BOO HOO!" in glossy Halloween hues of orange and black. Shock and denial are, of course, the first stage of grief. Second up are pain and guilt, which we get on either side this work: the wonderfully ludic *Uh Oh Eek*, 1986, a two-panel painting from the Reagan era that shows a U-shaped face with o's for features on the left as another figure, on the right, does a facepalm. Across from that is *Trickle Down*, 2016/18, a pillar of letters spelling out the title, with the word *trick* at the top. A robust depiction of our current tax plan? Seems so.

Rosen's works are always playfully timeless and urgent but her latest pieces, many of which feature a translucent application of gouache on watercolor paper, can't resist addressing our current dilemma. Among these is the optimistic *Triumph Over Trump (Blue Over Yellow)*, 2017, wherein an aquamarine *i* and *h* were added to the sad man's name, bodying forth a second potent message: Save your generation.

— Lauren O'Neill-Butler