

**Karin Broker**

***damn girls***

April 24 – May 31, 2014

**Artist Reception**

Thursday, April 24, 6:30 - 8:30 PM

McClain Gallery is pleased to announce Karin Broker's fourth solo exhibition at the gallery. The show, entitled "damn girls" presents a selection of new drawings and monoprints as well as hand-etched steel furniture. This exhibition presents the best of the artist's characteristic style, and reveals her growing interest in women's history as well as her steadfast commitment to drawing. An opening reception with the artist is scheduled for April 24, from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Using conté on formica panels, Broker depicts, large-scale bouquets of lush, overripe blooms and singular flowers in the manner of early Dutch masters. Here, the artist's descriptive skill is highlighted through the realistic quality of the flora and rich tonal values, while the incorporation of text, new to her work, forges connections with poetry and the lyricism of script, but also provides a nebulous armature to support the central core of each drawing. The subject matter of the text was obsessively compiled by the artist through researching the names of women and significant events that span centuries. In re-transcribing factual accounts, Broker questions established hierarchies within popular history, and offers a unique perspective that pays homage to these women.

The severity of presenting these histories creates a stark contrast to the more romantic elements of her drawings. The transcription of these names and various details has been compiled into a limited-edition small leather-bound book with seven chapters, each with a forward penned by the artist that directly relates to each drawing.

These drawings are shown amongst a domestic-scaled set of steel tables, chairs, and benches. There is a sparseness and austere quality to Broker's installations, fabricated in steel and in a Shaker aesthetic that connects them to the cold hard facts inscribed onto their surfaces. Also included in the exhibition are six monoprints with collaged elements that bring together her distinct romantic style with her mastery in printmaking. Continuing in the tradition of her work, throughout *damn girls* Karin weaves themes of femininity, beauty, and optimism with severity, gender stereotypes, tragedy, and loss.

Karin Broker is the subject of a solo museum exhibition opening in May entitled: "Karin Broker: wired, drawn, and nailed" at the Art Museum of Southeast Texas in Beaumont. It will run from May 24 - August 31 with an opening reception on Friday, May 30.

Karin Broker has served previous terms as the Department of Visual Arts Chair for Rice University and has been teaching at Rice since 1980. Originally from Pennsylvania, Broker moved to Houston shortly after earning her MFA from the University of Wisconsin and has been living and working in Houston for the past 30 years. Her artwork is in public collections nationwide including Brooklyn Museum of Art, McNay Art Museum, Smithsonian Institution, New York Public Library, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Blanton Museum of Art and many others.

