

# Los Angeles Times

## Art that speaks to deeper issues

By Sharon Mizota



"LET POWER Take a Female Form," installation view. Corazon del Sol looks to her art-world forebears.

Corazon del Sol maps family history at the Box. And reviews of Doug Ischar, Lucia Koch and others. I love what curator Mara McCarthy is doing at the Box. Focusing on under-recognized artists, particularly women, she is mounting museum-worthy exhibitions that expand the histories we thought we knew. Her latest, "Let Power Take a Female Form," is no exception. It looks at three generations of women from a family deeply entwined with L.A. art history.

Artist Corazon del Sol is the daughter of Eugenia P. Butler, who was also an artist and the daughter of Eugenia Butler, a prominent 1960s dealer of conceptual art by John Baldessari, James Lee Byars and Joseph Kosuth. The elder Butler's engagement with these luminaries forms the backdrop for this eclectic show, which mixes their works with those by her daughter and granddaughter. The younger Butler's interests were rooted in the conceptual art championed by her mother but later turned to more spiritual and community-minded concerns. Del Sol's contributions are mostly surreal, abstract sculptures, inspired by a dream journal she kept while going



through her mother's archives. The result is a network of relationships that recasts the cool intellectualism of Conceptual art in a more personal light.

In this spirit, Del Sol gives tours on Thursdays from 4 to 7 p.m., providing much-needed context for what might otherwise seem a dizzying array of disparate works. Frank, friendly and unpretentious, the tours are a fitting tribute to her mother, who in the 1990s began a series of "Kitchen Table" dinners designed to foster meaningful conversations. When I joined her, Del Sol dispelled some art world legends, such as the story of artist Dieter Roth's cheesefilled suitcases. When her grandmother showed the work in 1970, it was cited by health authorities for propagating flies and didn't sell. Butler's husband was said to have disposed of the odorous cases in the desert, but he actually just took them to the dump. Documentation of Roth's work is displayed next to a re-creation of a 1969 piece by the younger Butler. It is a large, hanging sheet of linen, backed with fluorescent lights, soaked with honey and dotted with dead flies. Like Roth's piece, it introduces the messy cycles of life into the typically pristine realm of art.

Del Sol also discussed works created by her mother in response to abuse suffered at the hands of both of her parents. Dark, abstract swirls and exploding, angry lines of text demonstrate how the younger Butler used art as a venue for expiating pain. Her daughter in turn performs an exorcism of sorts with a video in which she sets a pair of her grandparent's antique chairs in a boat adrift in the ocean. The image of the chairs, so often seen as stand-ins for the human body, bobbing out to sea, is both a cheeky and poignant farewell.

With the assertion that art should exist not for its own sake but in meaningful correspondence with real life, the exhibition answers its title's invocation, suggesting that "a female form" may not be a discreet shape but a powerful, unruly web.

