

# HYPERALLERGIC

Sensitive to Art & its Discontents

## The Amazing Erotic Art of Dorothy Iannone

by [Jillian Steinbauer](#) on June 2, 2014



Dorothy Iannone, "The Next Great Moment In History Is Ours" (1970), 73 x 102 cm (courtesy die Künstlerin, Air de Paris, Paris, and Peres Projects, Berlin) (photo by Joachim Littkemann)

As *New York Times* art critic Roberta Smith [has written](#), we live in the age of the art revival — a time when all sorts of artists are being recovered from their forgotten corners and brought into the art-world limelight. Perhaps predictably, many of those artists are women, many of them passed over by the establishment the first time around for reasons ranging from the [style of their work](#) to [sexism](#) (and often both).



Dorothy Iannone (2002) (photo © Rolf Walter) (click to enlarge)

One of those women is [Dorothy Iannone](#). Now 80, Iannone has been making and exhibiting brash, magnetic, erotic art since the 1960s, but it's only in the last five years that she's started to gain the major attention she's due.

In 2009, the New Museum gave her [her first solo exhibition](#) in a US institution. It was tiny, but complemented by a [more comprehensive show](#) at Anton Kern Gallery. Another retrospective gallery show, [This Sweetness Outside of Time](#), opened at Peres Projects in Los Angeles in 2010, and was followed by exhibitions at Paris's Palais de Tokyo and London's Camden Arts Centre. Now a new retrospective, also called *This Sweetness Outside of Time*, is on view in Berlin, at the [Berlinische Galerie Museum of Modern Art](#), showcasing Iannone's paintings, objects, and books from over five decades of her career.

As her art may suggest, Iannone is a self-taught painter; she learned the skill while married to painter James Upham. But in 1967, she took a trip to Iceland that changed her entire trajectory: there she met the artist Dieter Roth, and after one week she left her husband to be with him. In a welcome twist on the typical artist-muse gender relationship, Roth became Iannone's muse (and he called her his "lioness," which was the title of the 2009 New Museum show). Iannone made nonstop art about herself and Roth, and then other couples, making explicit, erotic love; her art became a kind of advocacy for what she calls "ecstatic unity."

Naturally, this led to her work being both censored and ignored. Happily, that's no longer the case. Iannone blends ancient erotic art with the formal sensibilities of a 20th-century self-taught artist; she puts painting, comics, illustration, and porn into a startling mix. In lieu of being in Berlin, below are some of the works on view in the current show at Berlinische Galerie, which closes this weekend. And if you want to read more about Iannone, Karen Rosenberg's [New York Times review](#) of her 2009 shows is a great place to start.