

M+B

ArtReview

SOGTFO (Sculpture or Get the Fuck Out)

28 February – 11 April 2015, François Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles

May 2015 Issue
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Tits or Get the Fuck Out. In the darker, scuzzier and more diabolically playful corners of the Internet, where identity is at best fluid and undefined, TOGTFO is, according to writer Quinn Norton, 'a transgression to test a new person's ability to participate within an in-group'. Though directed at women or users perceived to be women, you're not supposed to show your tits. That's maybe the worst possible response. Or the worst outside of taking it as a literal request and getting upset. Better is, maybe, 'All I have are your mom's and nobody wants those', or just ignore the fuckers.

The question presumes that the majority of /b/tards, anons, trolls, hackers and lurkers are dudes, which most of them are, and the Internet's language, culture and criteria have been largely set by men. Artist and exhibition curator Charlie White asserts that sculpture has had the same history, but that it shouldn't have had to, thus the show's title.



Of all the different media, sculpture has a particularly cock-dragging history and is dude-dominated in general, in LA in particular, and the gang of artists in this show engages with that history, collectively pushing the medium into new places. Of the six artists, all ladies, two midcareer and a trio of emergers, none are flashing their tits or buckling under the offence of patriarchy. With humour, panache, skill and style that matches and surpasses their male peers, the work of these artists supersedes any bullshit gendering.

Amanda Ross-Ho's Untitled Sculpture (Once U Go Black) (2015) quietly engages with LA sculpture icon Charles Ray's subtle and significant rescalings. Here the upsized bottom hips of a mannequin sport a fade-to-black of panties stacked atop panties creeping down its legs – an American Apparel model tweaked for surreal effect. The sculpture doesn't read here as an objectified body but rather as a bit of amusing motherfuckery (to use the Anonymous term) with display, bodies and commerce.

Kathleen Ryan beautifully engages with display and material in Bacchante (2015), which has concrete balloons tumbling down a granite plinth, a bulbous match for Nevine Mahmoud's ceramic balls in Basketball (2014) and Beachball (2015). Rounding onward, Mahmoud's gnarly, heavy metal spiked rings, plunked on and off pristine coloured platforms with one particularly sizeable vagina dentata calling itself O (2015), matches in shape and title Kelly Akashi's surreal free-floating wall, dubbed Figure oO (2015). Standing with two circles cleanly chopped out, the wall displays the artist's disembodied hand cast in wax. Rather than assertive phallic obelisks, we have assertive holes all the more badass for their yonic vacancies. Andrea Zittel's Flat Field Work #1 (2015) reads in this context as a bridge. Zittel takes issues of domesticity to a level of autarchic seriousness. Her perspicacity and facility with materials make craft, previously considered 'women's work', simply art.

Given the male-dominated history of sculpture, the ladies here offer neither a junior alternative nor a reactionary riposte, but a sophisticated set of objects working with essential issues of sculpture in ways that the gentlemen just couldn't. White locates with these artists an important shift in our understanding of art (especially the history of it in Los Angeles) and its relationship to gender, flowing out of feminist and trans advances but also the postgender continuum offered by online avatars. Sarah Lehrer-Graiwer sums up the possibilities beautifully in the final line of her essay that accompanies the exhibition: 'an all-female sculpture show is pretty cool, but an all-female Senate would be so much cooler'.