

Press Release: A Feminist and a Francophile - Holly Marie Armishaw

Back Gallery Project is pleased to present its second solo exhibition by Vancouver-based artist Holly Marie Armishaw. *A Feminist and a Francophile* draws together two of her greatest passions – women’s rights and French history and culture. The exhibition includes text-based art, photography, and installation that take on these disparate but interrelated subjects. Paris is Armishaw’s second city, having spent a considerable amount of time in France over the past 18 years. For this exhibition, she has converted the gallery into a Parisian pied-à-terre. The artist immerses our guests in a cozy French-style interior created through works that pay homage to both French photographer/inventor Louis Daguerre (infused with self-references to the history of photography) and to the artist René Magritte through the use of photographic trompe de l’oeil.

As the Women’s Rights Movement has become part of our everyday vernacular, Armishaw puts aside her personal narratives on feminine existence in favour of a more political, intersectional approach. Her art of protest is best exemplified by her iconic work *Liberté Égalité Sororité* (Liberty, Equality, Sisterhood) in which she makes a feminist revision to the national motto of France: “Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité” (Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood). The slogan’s origin stems from the French Revolution, one of Armishaw’s main areas of study and research. Though these words feature the key elements of democracy which we continue to hold dear today – liberty and equality – they exclude over half of the population. These societal pillars were also reflected in the “Déclaration des Droits de l’Homme et le Citoyen” (Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the [male] Citizen). Again, this excludes all women from sharing equal rights, even in light of the pivotal role that the women of Paris played with their heroic actions during the Revolution.

Armishaw has created several works on paper rendered in both gold leaf and nail polish, her signature “feminine” medium. She has also taken her work to the streets in both Paris and Vancouver through site-specific installations using vinyl on limestone in the political center of Paris and in the form of protest posters for the Women’s March in Vancouver. Another work that demonstrates the feminist revisionism in her oeuvre includes her series *How I Became a Feminist by Reading Nietzsche*. This series began as an intellectual journey exploring her roots as an artist and depicting the profound influence that Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, and Freud had on defining her core adult values as she was beginning art school. By parsing her art practice through political, social, and philosophical states, Armishaw is able to conceptually merge history with contemporary life and comment on the inequality toward and importance of women then and now.

New works also featured in:

*The Contemporary Art Gallery's 30th Annual Gala and Art Auction
Saturday, November 3rd, 2018; Rosewood Hotel Vancouver*

*Winter Group Exhibition: Krause Gallery, New York City
December, 2018, Manhattan, NY*

