

HEROES GALLERY

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Heather Rowe: Christina Ramberg

April 28th – June 11th, 2022
Opening April 28th, 5-8pm



Heroes Gallery is pleased to present work by contemporary artist Heather Rowe in conversation with Christina Ramberg (1946-1995). Both artists explore formal fragmentation of the body and subvert our sometimes-hostile cultural framing of femininity.

Heather Rowe's practice lives at the intersection of sculpture, architecture and film. Like an architect, she is building containers and frames for surrounding, protecting and controlling our bodies in space. Her fragmented constructions produce all the formal experiences of architecture; the familiarity of both salvaged and bought building materials, the physical references of a window, door and room, but we detect something threatening and destabilizing in our physical response to her works. With the many layered material slices and structural configurations, the space shifts and the room folds into itself as if being sucked into a black hole. Rowe's sculptures become liminal spaces themselves, transition points between locations or states of being. In an architectural sense, they are a threshold.

Rowe is also interested in cinematic thresholds and has cited films about hauntings, specifically ones with a woman being tormented by a paranormal presence, as an influence in prior work. These stories often illustrate the slippage between victim vs. heroine, truth vs. fiction and feminine vs. masculine. Through mirrors and repetition, Rowe uses a sort of spatial stutter to recreate a spectral presence, forcing the sensation of dematerialization in her viewers and casting doubt onto what they think they know about space they are standing in. Similar to the

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experience of watching any good horror film, the viewer becomes the performer, the observed, and the voyeur simultaneously.

Christina Ramberg's repetitive drawings of undergarments illustrate the female form in a constant state of modularity and mutation. The obsessive repetition of the drawings and the investigation into the undergarment's intent to structurally correct the female form hybridize our bodies with architecture. The drawings show the female body as building blocks or raw material and Ramberg takes obvious pleasure in dissecting the garments that bind, tuck and lift women's bodies into 'perfect' standardized shapes. Her work is a conversation between the macabre fetishization of this corrective binding (the restraining of untamed bodies) and the power of constructing gender, sexuality and identity.

Both artists examine the mutability of the feminine form and the power that is both given and taken away through the process of dissolving and materializing. Their work is based on the belief that bodies conform, resist or succumb to their surroundings but the process, often interwoven with desire, creates a protective force.

Heather Rowe has a BA from Massachusetts College of Art and received her MFA from Columbia University. She has exhibited in numerous institutions and galleries including PS1/MoMA, NY; the Indianapolis Museum of Art, IN; the Contemporary Arts Center, OH; UMMA/University of Michigan Museum of Art, MI; Galerie Zink, Berlin, Germany; D'Amelio Terras, NY; Michael Benevento Gallery, CA; Ballroom Marfa, TX; Andrea Rosen, NY; White Columns, NY; and Artists Space, NY. In 2008, her work was featured in the Whitney Biennial. In the past decade Rowe has exhibited extensively, including; Socrates Sculpture Park, NY; solo exhibitions at James Cohan Gallery, NY, and Lucien Terras, NY; and installations at Diverse Works, TX and Providence College Galleries, RI.

Her work has been featured in numerous publications such as: Artforum, Modern Painters, the New York Times, Art in America, The New Yorker, Flash Art, and Art Review. Adjunct, full, and part-time teaching posts have included: Harvard University (Department of Visual and Environmental Studies), Yale University and Cooper Union. She is currently Associate Professor and Graduate Program Director in the Sculpture Department at the Rhode Island School of Design.

Image: Heather Rowe, *The Operator*, 2022, found frames, one-way mirror, mirror, wood, fabric, paint, steel, mica, 23 x 26 x 8 inches