**Bailey Contemporary Arts Presents *Gritty in Pink***

**Juried Exhibition Curated by Lisa Rockford and Megan Castellon**

Dates: June 6-July 14

Reception: June 10|6-9pm| FREE

Lecture & Panel discussion: June 24, from 1-3pm, Free

Old Town Untapped reception July 7|6-9 pm| FREE

[www.baileyarts.org](http://www.baileyarts.org/" \t "_blank)

 Bailey Contemporary Arts in Pompano Beach, welcomes curators Lisa Rockford and Megan Castellon for the juried exhibition *Gritty in Pink*. Defying the traditional notion that pink represents delicate, saccharine depictions of femininity, these artists embrace subversive uses of the color. Pink is instead presented to embody strength through bold and often confrontational aesthetics, whether through abstraction with aggressive textures and brushwork, or through conceptual, humorous, ironic, or subversive and symbolic imagery.

 Several months ago, Rockford and Castellon conducted a call for artists of all genders to enter work that subverts traditional associations with the color pink. The exhibit will feature a range of artistic techniquesfrom 53 artists, both regional and national, whose processes include mixed media, painting, collage, video art, fiber art, ceramics, site-specific installation, and performance art.

“We are thrilled to have two outstanding guest curators for this exhibit,” said Director of Programming Grace Gdaniec. “Last year’s tremendously successful *Swimming with Narcissus* was also curated by Rockford and featured works by Castellon. We are delighted by their return and the premise of this intriguing show.”

“I wanted to create this exhibition because of what the color pink symbolizes. It was a color that I was using a lot in my work, and it made me question the idea of pink. What does pink mean? It has distinctly feminine associations that reflect a dainty, soft, delicate essence. But I knew pink was so much more than this. I wanted to challenge traditional notions of the color pink, and by doing so, challenge traditional notions of femininity. What could pink be if it is truly represented the full spectrum of femininity, that is, humanity? Each of the artists in this exhibit transcends the stale use of pink as a symbol for all that is stereotypically feminine, and creates a range of perspectives from the grotesque to the bold to the strong,” said Castellon.

The opening on **June 10** will include a custom-tailored performance by **Kikimora studio**. Olga Saretsky, aka Kikimora, is a costume fashion designer, and performer. She will be designing a special pink costume for the exhibit that is directly inspired by her idea that pink is a global unifying color, as she states, “We are all pink on the inside.”

For Rockford, there are an array of themes presented by the color pink. “The artworks will encompass creative and clever uses of the color,” she said. Themes encompassed will include: Pink as a signifier of gender, Pink in marketing & consumerism, Pink as the color of flesh, the use of pink in fiber art & craft, a “Gritty” textural use of pink, Pink & power hierarchy, and Pink as a classifying color for feminist politics.

**A few artist highlights below:**

The most vivid use of pink in the exhibit, which will be hung right near the entrance, is by **Devan Jiminez.** Jimenez used a recently invented paint that is considered to be the world’s pinkest pigment yet, a powerfully fluorescent color that reflects light resulting in this special pink. The artwork is purely a deer’s pelvis, completely covered in the fluorescent pigment, which hangs on the wall, like a trophy. Jimenez explains: “We generally understand the pelvis to be a symbol of female sexuality, as it contains a woman’s sexual organs. Additionally, a deer is often regarded as a symbol of fertility and grace. These symbolic references remind the viewer of the persistent strength of the female body and mind.”

An ambitious site-specific installation, which also utilizes found materials, will be created onsite by **Anna Kell,** who is coming all the way from Lewisburg, PA to install the work. Kell considers the artwork, *Pink Field in Bloom,* to be a type of mural, made from reclaimed mattress fabrics and the colors and patterns inherent to them. Responding to the theme of the show, all of the mattresses used would be classifiable as "pink" in coloration. In this mural, the pinkness and inherent decorative quality of the selected mattresses will be emphasized by what I imagine to be a gradation in saturation across the wall, creating a striking color field, the source of which is the material itself.  Kell states “Mattresses are the type of everyday, domestic objects seen abandoned or discarded so often throughout the city, that we rarely register their presence.  Though this piece will have a strong formal presence, I believe it will also engage viewers' imaginations as they contemplate the beauty, history, and symbolism that I believe reverberates through this material. (All of my) works are indicative of my ongoing fascination with the use of the color pink in our cultural commodities and domestic interiors, particularly as a signifier of something inherently feminine."

Another installation,*Lady Cave,*by **Laura Marsh** will be an interactive spot for the viewer, and designated “selfie spot” which includes props and costume accessories. By utilizing sewing and embellishment, and defining the space between material fascination and play, Marsh places viewers inside her work. In the installation *Lady Cave*, she presents a word play on the phrase, *man cave*. The video in the installation provides the introduction, “Welcome to the Lady Cave, which is not just for ladies.” The sculptural environment serves as a space for decompression and wonderment, regardless of gender. Providing a familiar, yet curious space where viewers can seek refuge and embrace a soft aesthetic, Marsh’s multimedia installations excite the senses and encourage social media engagement.

**Alessandra Mondolfi** also illustrates the parallel between pink and flesh in her sculptural assemblage wall pieces. She creates dynamic pink flowers that at first glance, appear to be surreal flowers, but upon closer inspection, it is revealed that they are entirely made from casts of body parts. Alessandra explains, “This work is based on a physical and intimate material exploration that uses my body as a vehicle to engage intellectually and emotionally in the process of self-rediscovery. I am inspired by the patterns, colors and textures in nature and conceptually draw from the art precedents of flowers as sensual objects the symbolism of the circle. These sculptures subtlety touch upon ideas about intimacy, transformation, vulnerability, individuality, perception, desire and pleasure.”

Several of the works submitted had a common thread: the use of fiber art processes. These artists are evidence of a recent trend in contemporary art. There is a growing society of women artists that choose fiber arts (skills that were previously abandoned by feminists for their ties to domestic duties) in order to both continue the tradition, and reclaim the craft from their domestic history, while transforming the skills from a feminist point of view.

**Leora Klaymer Stewart,**who created the artwork *Life Cycles* when she was challenged with surviving breast cancer, is an exquisite example of the use of traditional fiber art processes. The series represents "life cycles", as in birth, growth, death and rebirth or renewal as in the cycles of life as well as in nature. The circular form of the work can dually represent a breast, an eye, or cellular structures. She constructed the form in a loop stitch technique that is often used to construct basket forms, with wrapped elements representing forms or veins growing out from the opening, and glass beads representing cells as in cellular growth.

**Amy Gross** also illustrates the symbiosis of organic structures in her pink biotope. As an artist who usually restricts herself to a palette, of green, blue, and red, and black, Amy was inspired by the exhibition theme and decided to work in pink for the first time. “Working in pink for the first time nudged me away from plant life and towards the corporeal. Pink made growths visceral. Surfaces became more like skin, sap turned sanguine, roots became veins, interiors turned from caves to cavities. I thought that pink was the color of delicacy, but it transformed my sculpture into something that could bleed and bite, a living thing that could look right back at me.

**Peggy Blei Hracho and Emily Blei Hracho** are a mother and daughter from Pennsylvania who both use fiber art processes. They submitted their works separately to the call for entry, and both had artwork accepted into the exhibit.

*In Cut & Comb, Dresden Plate*, Peggy drew direct inspiration from the appearance and lyrics of the pop stars Lorde and Brooke Candy. The piece focuses on the gritty attitudes of these female performers and the style of their hair along with its importance to their identity and attitude. Peggy states “These edgy woman performers are whimsically juxtaposed over the top of a strictly traditional quilt pattern, (Dresden Plate), to show their resistance to the normal gender expectations.”

In contrast, Emily creates works that are each inspired by title of a pornographic subreddit. Though her artworks are completely abstract manipulations of thread, fabric & yarn, their luscious, playful, and tactile nature directly relate to the voyeuristic act of viewing internet porn.

**Gardner Cole Miller**, one of the few male artists in the exhibit, also takes inspiration from online subcultures. *Quilt Noodz or Rosies and Blowsies* is an installation ofIndividual quilt squares pieced into a larger arrangement. Gardner began the quilting project by requesting nude selfies submissions via a Tumblr page. He then fashions embroidery patterns into a variable collection of free-motion-embroidered sewing on quilt squares. Gardner states “This project specifically uses the color pink alongside delicate florals and chintz fabrics as an exploration of gendered attitudes towards craft as being feminine and therefore non-threatening, conservative, and purely concerned with spheres of the domestic. By deploying tactics of reclamation and over-performance of the commonly accepted attitudes towards craft, gender and sexuality collide to dispel these notions, embrace the politicized body, and perpetuate the inherent queerness of identity while complicating and misdirecting a typical male gaze.” The project is ongoing; submissions are still being received.

**Elizabeth Morisette**observed the marketing of pink and began amassing a collection of discarded childhood toys. In *China Pink,* Morisette used a stitching technique to create a 4-foot long tapestry of toys in various shades of pink. By creating a waterfall of these products, we are not only presented with the sheer amount of physical waste as a result of our consumption, but with the saccharine colors that lose their appeal in mass quantity.

**Paula Henderson**uses commercial culture as the foundation for her work,*Collide-A-Scope II.*The painting is a carefully crafted synthesis of several silhouettes traced from models in advertisements. Henderson states: “My works reference the power vested in contemporary commercialized female media representations. My tracings and manipulated fusions of these perfected bodies are intended to resonate with the consequences of identities shaped under the pervasive influence of the beauty industry.Pink, the color assigned at birth to designate us as ‘girl’-softer, weaker partner to the blue of ‘male’- is deployed to acknowledge and protest identities manufactured by the central male sphere.”

**Samantha Lyn Aasen**uses the medium of photography, and herself as a model, to explore theshifting boundary between girlhood and womanhood, as well as gender and sexuality in pop culture.  “The focus of my practice is my own ambivalence towards the Princess-industrial-complex, which in some way mirrors a cultural ambivalence towards women’s and girl’s sexuality…The images compare and contrast these experiences by looking at popular culture through the lens of a younger version of myself exploring my gender. “By framing my art making this way, I recall on my own experience as an adolescent.” A humorous illustration of this is her photograph *Feet,* a close up image of her feet failing to fit child-sized princess shoes. The photograph not only focuses on the blemishes and razor burn of her very “real” legs, but characterizes the infantilization of women and draws an outstanding correlation to any futile exertion to embody or idolize Cinderella.

Evaluating a very different side of consumer culture, **Tina La Porta**questions the use of pink in products likeprescription pills and automotive paint, which are the materials in her artwork. She asks, “Why are pills pink? Are pink pills marketed specifically toward women? Why is automotive paint call Porn Star Pink?” La Porta has been working with pills as an artistic medium ever since her diagnosis with Schizophrenia. She says the work is both personal and universal in that her personal experience also speaks to a broader phenomenon of our pill consuming culture.

**Judges Award Process and Lecture**

Prominent art professionals will serve as guest judges and visit the exhibition after it is installed, voting for the top artists. Any artist that receives at least one vote will receive the judges’ feedback and a “Judges Choice Award” certificate. The artists with the most votes will receive cash prizes, splitting a minimum of $1500.

Confirmed guest judges include:

* Francie Bishop Good, Art collector, Founder of Girls Club collection
* Kellie Bodle, Assistant Registrar, Boca Museum of Art
* Rochi Llaneza, Creative consultant & Independent Curator
* Ibett Yanez, Director, De La Cruz collection
* Melissa Wallen, Assistant to the Director, de la Cruz Collection
* Jill Slaughter, Chief Curator, The Frank art gallery, Pembroke Pines
* Monica & Tasha Lopez de Victoria (the TM sisters), Artists

On **June 24, from 1-3pm**, Lisa Rockford will give a lecture that outlines the permeation of the color pink into Western culture, and highlighting examples of the use of pink by historic, global, and contemporary professional artists. The lecture will be followed by a panel discussion with 4 artists selected from the exhibition.

Rockford states “It is my aim that this exhibition, lecture, and panel discussion will compel the audience to think critically about the prescribed, marketed representations of pink, and spark a dialogue that will continue after the exhibition; a dialogue which is not spoken about in sufficient measure.”

“When trying to consider the effect that this use of pink in marketing has on gender paradigms, consider how the cultural constructs of the color influences our learned behaviors. Those pink toys and pink products are integrated into everyday life and subconsciously condition their owners to emulate the identity that is marketed with them.

The cultural acclimatizing of pink, linked with femininity as cuteness, princess persona, or sexiness are damaging to women. The more that **pink** is narrowly associated with cutesiness, and female beauty, the more narrow gender roles and social dynamics will be. Just as the objectification or sexualization of women makes them targets, the infantilization of women ultimately belittles them. The more that society depicts narrow representations of femininity, the more confined gender will be, the more discrimination there will be, and the more limited the choices and rights of many persons will be.

Artists are fundamental mediators in the critique of prevalent social norms and cultural constructs, with the responsibility to transform the perception of the color, and therefore it's place in culture.”

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