

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

"Rachel Lee Hovnanian "The Women's Trilogy Project"
Leila Heller Gallery (Chelsea)" NY Art Beat

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Leila Heller Gallery presents a contemporary artist Rachel Lee Hovnanian's first three-part exhibition, The Women's Trilogy Project, on view at Leila Heller Gallery in Manhattan. The multi-part exhibition will run consecutively from February 24 to July 28, 2018, and will be the artist's third solo show with the gallery.

The Women's Trilogy Project will include three installments of work, which evaluate contemporary societal dependencies and cultural pressures projected through a feminist lens. Expanding on familiar themes in her previous work, Hovnanian uses each exhibition in this series to initiate difficult conversations surrounding modern relationships with technology, addiction, and gender roles, through a collection of interactive installations, paintings, sculptures and works on paper. Hovnanian draws on personal areas of her Southern upbringing, to juxtapose our current cultural values. She challenges the viewer to question what gender barriers have been overcome in our society, if anything at all, and the inert societal struggles females still face presently.

Part I of The Women's Trilogy Project is (Ray Lee Project Vol. 1) NDD Immersion Room, a large-scale immersive installation whose title derives from the concept of Nature Deficit Disorder ("NDD"), used to describe a form of human alienation from nature that results in both a greater susceptibility to negative moods and a reduced attention span. In order to enter the exhibition, visitors will surrender their phones and in return receive a lantern to enter a dimly lit interior forest barely illuminated by a campfire with very few signs of civilization. "Hovnanian challenges viewers to reevaluate their own relationship with digital technology," notes curator Chris Byrne.

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Hovnanian created this exhibition under her male pseudonym, Ray Lee, assigned by her peers during adolescence to reflect her interest in stereotypically masculine outdoor past-times like camping and fishing. “As women, possessions, gender roles, stereotypes drive us to actions and limitations that are artificial rather than real,” says the artist. By producing work under her male pseudonym, Hovnanian overcomes the preconceptions of work being created by female artists.

Expanding upon the exhibition that took place during Armory Week at the SPRING/BREAK Art Show 2017, (Ray Lee Project Vol. 1) NDD Immersion Room has been re-conceptualized and expanded specifically for Leila Heller Gallery.