

# LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

Milzoff, Rebecca. 'Rachel Lee Hovnanian's Ambitious 'The Women's Trilogy Project' Probes the Complexities of Modern Feminism.' *DEPARTURES*. (July 03, 2018).

## DEPARTURES

### Rachel Lee Hovnanian's Ambitious 'The Women's Trilogy Project' Probes the Complexities of Modern Feminism



Jared Siskin/Patrick McMullan via Getty Images

The first living female artist to be offered three consecutive gallery shows, tackling everything from social media addiction to substance abuse, Hovnanian completes her immersive series run with 'Pure' at Leila Heller Gallery.

Born in West Virginia, raised in Houston and currently based in New York, artist [Rachel Lee Hovnanian](#) is known for her multidisciplinary work drawing upon her Southern upbringing and engaging with modern ideas of narcissism, intimacy, and obsession, along with our current addiction to media and technology. Her ambitious [The Women's Trilogy Project](#) has rolled out over the course of six months, [taking over an entire gallery](#) with its three parts. In the first, [\(Ray Lee Project Vol. 1\) NDD Immersion Room](#), Hovnanian used an immersive environment mimicking a forest (real pine trees and

# LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

crickets were brought in, and visitors were required to part with their phones) to examine human alienation from nature. (Hovnanian worked under a male pseudonym, "Ray Lee," that she was given by her peers as a teen due to her interest in stereotypically male outdoor activities.) [Part 2, Happy Hour](#), included a series of new large-scale paintings drawing on Hovnanian's childhood, including memories of her father's alcoholism and her own dyslexia, and encouraged viewers to directly confront often uncomfortable topics.



Jared Siskin/Patrick McMullan via Getty Images

The final part of the series, [Pure](#), is finally up and running through the end of the month. A continuation of the themes Hovnanian established in the first two segments of the show, the works in *Pure* take the social constructs of consumerism and societal pressures as a takeoff point, with the iconic Ivory soap bar as central symbol representative of mass consumption and the American obsession with "purity." A series of marble sculptures anchor the show, created by Hovnanian while taking temporary residence among Italy's famed marble quarries, including the most monumental Ivory bar to perhaps ever be produced. If you are looking for a refreshingly frank summer show, and a refreshing take on modern consumerism and feminist thought, Hovnanian's work provides the perfect palate cleanser. (568 W. 25th St. [leilahellergallery.com](http://leilahellergallery.com))