



IVORY



RACHEL LEE HOVNANIAN

THE WOMEN'S TRILOGY PROJECT





PURE

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RACHEL S. SMALL

PURE is a meditation on perfectionism in a culture besieged by aspirational images. In a digital age propelled by social media, these images are omnipresent, compelling users towards a societal ideal of perfection and purity. A stately Carrara marble sculpture, carved in the likeness of an Ivory Soap bar, is the foundational image of this third and final installment of Rachel Lee Hovnanian's *The Women's Trilogy Project*.

While the first show, (*The Ray Lee Project Vol. 1*): *NDD Immersion Room*, explored a societal shift in attention from natural environments towards new digital worlds, the second part, *Happy Hour*, spread into more personal territory for the artist, as it broached her father's alcoholism and bore witness to deeply entrenched gender roles she learned as a young woman in Texas. Underlying these concepts is a concern for the human condition as technology continues to splinter the collective nature of lived experience. As a reaction against this, Hovnanian's work encourages viewers to take a step back, perhaps taking a moment to question their acceptance of this new reality.

PURE seeks to shed light on the often-detrimental effects of media on our psyches. Social media platforms have become the current podiums from which we are encouraged to broadcast our curated selves. *PURE* presents Ivory Soap casts as icons of societal pressures towards perfection, modeled from the large Carrara marble soap sculpture that commands the gallery space.

The specter of an impossible femininity looms behind the appeal of Ivory Soap, a brand that, for much of the 20th century, advertised the product's powder-white sheen as evidence of its elemental purity. In the digital age, the ideal of purity can be read via social media culture, through which users – particularly women – are compelled to present curated personalities and lifestyles to their peers. These infinitely divergent perspectives between digital presentation and authentic self give rise to mutual alienation rather than a heightened sense of community. *PURE* invites visitors to meditate on their own identity in the age of social media and the true self in Selfie.

As visitors proceed through the gallery space, they are invited to reflect upon any negative thoughts prompted by these constructs of perfection. With *PURE*, Hovnanian has created an environment that engages the viewer in a communicative and intersubjective conversation with the work. By encouraging the viewer to enter the composition of this installation, the artist fosters an environment for a collective sharing of experiences. In *PURE*, she invokes that sense of community that social media was originally designed to promote.

In the front room, a scrawling, pink paint drawing blankets the walls, punctuated by sketches of miniature Ivory Soaps. A neon sculpture entitled *FLIRL* (an acronym for “Feel Love In Real Life”) casts a soft glow that sends piles of Ivory Soap casts into relief. Each plaster cast is emblazoned with the Ivory logo, a symbol that is endlessly repeated in towering piles of soap bars.

The second space, with soap bars piled high against white walls, would be reminiscent of a quarry if not for a series of ethereal, curtained-off “meditation wombs,” as Hovnanian describes them, positioned at the feet of these imitation Ivory towers. Visitors are invited to don headphones and take a quiet moment in the meditation wombs to reflect upon their own relationships to perfectionism.

Looking further into the space, a bright white light heralds the final room. Past the entrance, visitors start down a pathway of glowing orbs that leads them to a washing machine-as-ceremonial altar. It is on top of this altar that participants are invited to select an Ivory Soap cast and write their own negative thoughts on this cultural symbol of purity. As the final activation, visitors smash their Ivory Soap casts with a hammer, obliterating the power of the slippery “perfect” lies that hold us spellbound.

Imperfection
is
Perfection
ILP



Beautiful

Intelligent

Talented

Creative

Honest

BITCH







Beautiful

Intelligent

Talented

Creative

Honest

BITCH























Delete Negative
Thoughts

DNT







ALVORBY















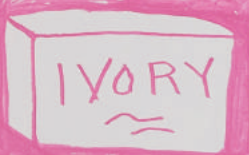




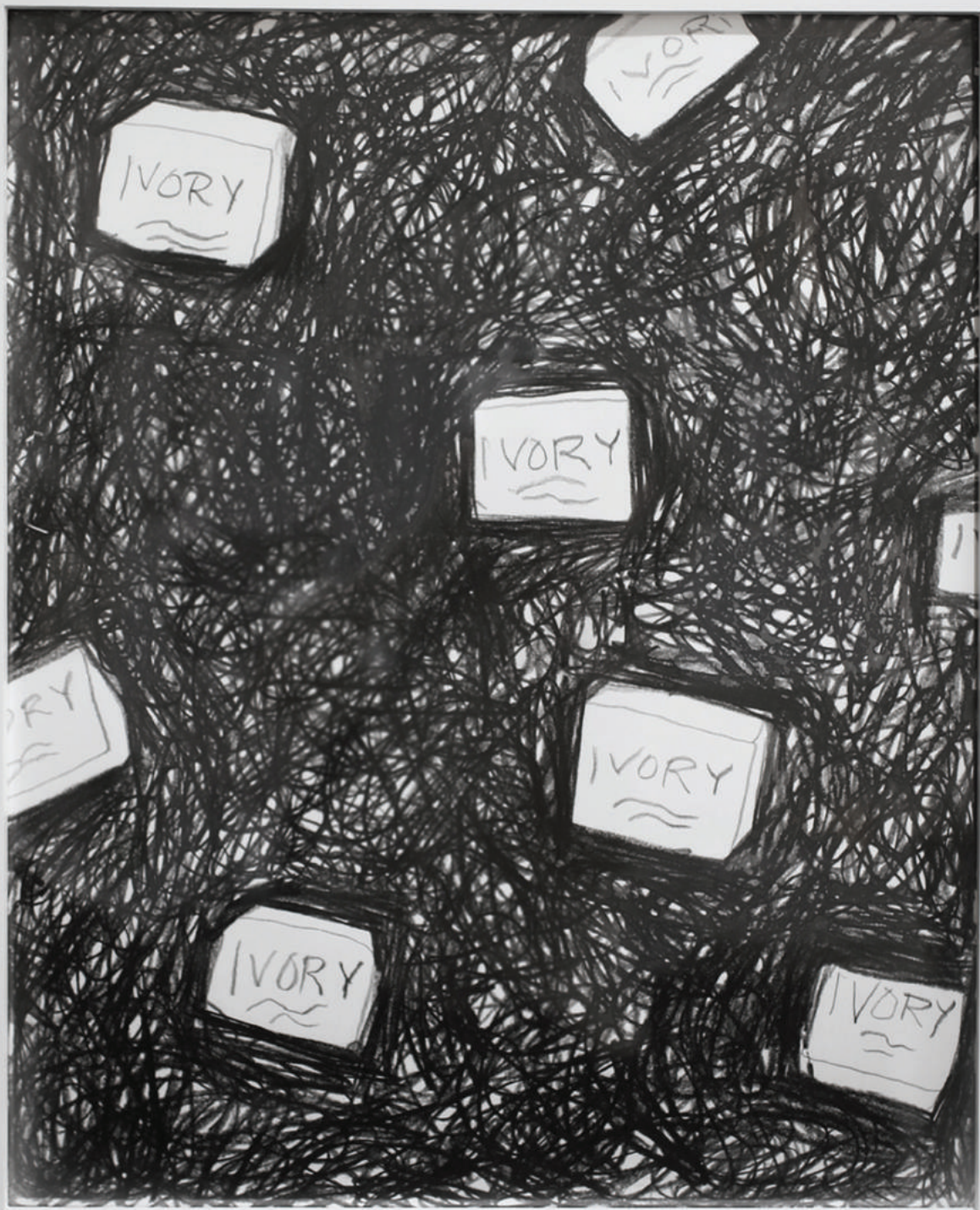


Feel Love
In Real Life

FLIRL







RACHEL LEE HOVNANIAN

Born in Parkersburg, WV

Lives and works in New York, NY

EDUCATION

BFA, University of Texas, Austin, TX

Post-Grad, Parsons School of Design, New York, NY

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- | | |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2018 | <i>The Women's Trilogy Project</i> , Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY |
| 2017 | <i>(The Ray Lee Project Vol. 1) NDD Immersion Room</i> , Victori + Mo, Brooklyn, NY |
| 2016 | <i>Perfect Baby Showroom</i> , Public Installation, Dallas Art Fair, Dallas, TX |
| 2014 | <i>Plastic Perfect</i> , Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY
<i>Plastic Perfect</i> , Pechersky Gallery, Moscow, Russia
<i>New Year's Feast: Beijing</i> , Joyce Gallery, Beijing, China |
| 2013 | <i>Rachel Lee Hovnanian: Power, Beauty, Narcissism and Other New Work</i> , Imago Gallery, Palm Springs, CA |
| 2012 | <i>Mud Pie</i> , Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY
<i>Too Good to be True</i> , Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong |
| 2011 | <i>American Beauty: Too Good to be True</i> , Foundation Pons, Barcelona, Spain |
| 2010 | <i>American Beauty: Too Good to be True</i> , Aina Nowack/AAC, Madrid, Spain
<i>Too Good to be True</i> , Carrie Secrist Gallery, Chicago, IL
<i>Power and Burden of Beauty</i> , Galerij ARTRA, Kalmthout, Belgium |
| 2009 | <i>Power & Burden of Beauty</i> , Jason McCoy, Inc., New York, NY
<i>Power & Burden of Beauty</i> , Meredith Long & Company, Houston, TX |
| 2007 | <i>Rachel Hovnanian: Preservation of the Narcissus</i> , Jason McCoy, Inc., New York, NY |
| 2005 | <i>Preservation of the Narcissus</i> , Meredith Long & Company, Houston, TX |
| 2001 | <i>Isolation Beauty</i> , David Beitzel Gallery, New York, NY |
| 2000 | <i>Isolation Beauty</i> , Meredith Long & Company, Houston, TX |

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2018 *The Ideal Feminine/The Feminine Ideal?*, Winston Wachter Fine Art, New York, NY
Tick Tock: Time in Contemporary Art, Lehman College Art Gallery, Bronx, NY
- 2017 *Fool The Eye*, Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn Harbor, NY
- 2016 *Summer Group Show*, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY
Feast for the Eyes, Nassau County Museum of Art, Roslyn Harbor, NY
- 2015 *Seeing Now*, 21c Museum Hotel, Durham, NC
Summer Show, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY
ART AM 3 (Artisti Americani e Non), Galleria Spazio Soncino, Soncino, Italy
Sweet Sensations: UConn Reads the Omnivore's Dilemma, The William Benton Museum of Art, Storrs, CT
- 2014 *Look At Me: Portraiture from Manet to the Present*, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY
- 2013 *Dis-semblance: Projecting and Perceiving Identity*, 21c Museum Hotel, Cincinnati, OH
Bass! How Low Can You Go?, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY
Transparencies: Contemporary Art and A History of Glass, Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, IA
- 2011 *Tender is the Night*, Marine Contemporary, Venice Beach, CA
Leila Heller Summer Show, South Hampton, NY
January White Sale, Loretta Howard Gallery, New York, NY
Public Exhibition, Manarat al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
- 2010 *East Meet West on the East End*, Tipoli Gallery of Contemporary Art, South Hampton, New York, NY
Black and White, Jason McCoy Gallery, New York, NY
Think Pink, Gavlak Gallery, Palm Beach, FL
- 2009 *Parades and Processions: Here Comes Everybody*, Parasol Unit Foundation for Contemporary Art, London, England
- 2007 *Flowers*, Leila Taghinia-Milani Heller Gallery, New York, NY
Options within Realism, Jason McCoy Gallery, New York, NY
- 2006 *Black and White, Old and New*, Leila Taghinia-Milani Heller Gallery, New York, NY
Winter, Gallery Group Show, Meredith Long Gallery, Houston, TX
- 2003 *Target Benches for Central Park*, Christie's Auction House, New York, NY
- 2002 *Landscapes, Gallery Group Show*, Meredith Long & Company, Houston, TX

LIST OF WORKS

FLIRL, 2018

Neon mounted on metal
36 x 48 inches
Edition of 3 + 2 AP

DNT, 2018

Neon mounted on metal
36 x 48 inches
Edition of 3 + 2 AP

BITCH, 2018

Neon, electrical cord
54.75 x 73.35 inches
Edition of 3 + 2 AP

IIP, 2018

Neon, electrical cord
34.75 x 23.75 inches
Edition of 3 + 2 AP

PURE Marble Jumbo, 2018

Carrara marble
50 x 30 x 21 inches
Edition of 3

PURE Marble Large, 2018

Carrara marble
15 x 10.5 x 3.75 inches
Edition of 8

PURE Marble Medium, 2018

Carrara marble
12.75 x 8.75 x 4.75

Chasing Perfect I, 2018

Graphite on paper
25.5 x 35.5 inches unframed
30 x 40 inches framed

Chasing Perfect II, 2018

Graphite on paper
25.5 x 35.5 inches unframed
30 x 40 inches framed

Chasing Perfect III, 2018

Graphite on paper
17 x 21 inches

Chasing Perfect VI, 2018

Graphite on paper
17 x 21 inches

Chasing Perfect Pink I, 2018

Colored pencil on paper
17 x 21 inches

Ivory Soap, 2018

Plaster sculpture infused with
Ivory Soap, acrylic, mirrored
glass
9.5 x 7 x 3.5 inches





Printed on the occasion of the exhibition:

RACHEL LEE HOVNANIAN
PURE

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