



Happy Hour

RACHEL LEE HOVNANIAN

THE WOMEN'S TRILOGY PROJECT

3
This will help r



the first father



HAPPY HOUR



Happy Hour

MIMI THOMPSON

The various uses and pleasures of alcohol have been understood for centuries. George Washington gave his troops liquor to spur them on in battle, and in the late 19th century the French often enjoyed a five p.m. absinthe-fueled “l’heure verte.” In the 1920s, prohibition sent many to enjoy their cocktails in speakeasies and at home, a trend that eventually led to the full access we have today. Although seen as a pleasure, and to some a necessary one, the use of alcohol can lead to concern about the effect it has on individuals and families. This is not a new discussion however. In her book *Drinking in America*, Susan Cheever notes that the Pilgrims believed drinking was from God, but the effects of drinking were from the Devil.

In her series *Happy Hour*, Rachel Hovnanian examines addiction and its ability to shatter any illusions we may cling to about a seamless life. Perfection, often linked with purity and infallibility, can only exist as a concept, not only due to the impossibility of achieving it but also to our conflicting allegiances to both community and the individual. These paintings and room installation are deeply personal and illustrate how society’s rules attempt to create order but often have the opposite effect. Our culture holds up many ideals to match and expectations to meet. In this work, the artist shreds those ideals and shows us an untethered world full of anxiety and fear; but, in the midst of this disquiet, she also reveals a tenderness and compassion for the perpetrator of this domestic anxiety and the subject of many of these paintings—her father.

Hovnanian grew up in Texas in the 1960s and ‘70s, an era that embraced the homogeneous and banal world of *Dick and Jane* books as a model. In these new paintings, she has taken the format of the lined page from those books and written excerpts from Dick and Jane’s conversations or her own thoughts in cursive and in chalk over layered, painted and collaged surfaces. One painting reads:

“Look Jane,” said Dick. “Here is something funny, can you guess what it is?”
“Oh yes,” said Jane, “I can guess. I can guess what it is. This will help me find father.”

An empty chaise lounge is drawn in chalk at the bottom of the canvas, and torn Girl Scout merit badges are glued to the surface. Photographs are embedded in most of these paintings, and in this particular painting, a picture of a watchful young girl—the artist—is repeated many times. Hovnanian’s father was an alcoholic: unpredictable and often angry when drinking. These paintings are snapshots of her family life and perhaps an attempt to physically manifest the dramatic effect his drinking habits had on their family dynamic.

One of the most poignant paintings, *Blue Monster*, is an unusual portrait. Painted with a scumbled blue surface reminiscent of Ad Reinhardt’s early paintings, this work has the words “Happy Hour” written in cursive on chalk lines. A drifting figure drawn in chalk (Hovnanian’s father) seems suspended, and beneath his feet pink letters spell out the word “help.” The words “I’m Fine” are written in white chalk on top of his plaintive plea. On the left side of the canvas is a school bus, perhaps carrying the children to a more predictable environment. Hovnanian’s mother also used to gather the children in the car and take them away when their father became very angry. And at the top left, embedded in the sea of blue, is a photograph of what seems to be a perfect family standing outside and looking at their home.

Hovnanian often addresses the anxiety brought on by our attempts to match society's expectations. In the past, she has created work that underlines and subverts our obsession with making our human appearance conform to an acceptable norm. And, more recently, she has revealed the alienation that our technological devices have encouraged. The *Happy Hour* series is a study of what happens when we are not able to follow the plan that society presents to us. One family member struggles in his daily life, and the other family members feel they must overcompensate to assure neighbors and friends that their family isn't crumbling. Children grow up early in these homes under the mistaken illusion that making things right is their responsibility.

Hovnanian also addresses the disparity between how men and women are allowed to behave. *Pink Lady* and *Pink Panty Dropper*, both like fever dreams, feature the phrase "A Questionable Reputation". In both works, symbolic objects float on a painterly rose-colored surface. In the larger work we see white gloves covering long arms, a pearl necklace—symbolizing purity—placed in contrast to a cocktail glass holding a penis shooting "pearl necklaces," cocktails, beer, the invective "loosen up," and cascading cherries. The ribald underbelly of social rituals fights with convention on these canvases, underscoring the pressures put on women to maneuver their way through both acceptable and unacceptable sexual and social situations. If they can't survive the real activities behind society's false front or dare to speak up about the unequal roles of men and women, subtle punishments emerge, aimed at slowing women's progress. These paintings reflect the atmosphere of Hovnanian's childhood in Texas, when the rules of social behavior were sent down from previous generations, causing a disconnect between men and women and older and younger generations.

Hovnanian's room installation of liquor bottles, with walls made of green chalkboards covered with chalk lines and topped with barbed wire, is a construction that melds childhood innocence with adult indulgence. The bottles lining the racks are empty, but each one has a label made of a page torn from the 1947 Girl Scout Handbook. The artist brings this handbook with her everywhere to draw and write on. She takes cues from the text on the chosen page in order to create her own counter text, often illustrating the label with pictures. On one label, the Girl Scout text instructs a young girl to place a lamp where she and another family member can use it together. Over this text Hovnanian writes, "Turn off the lights so he thinks you are sleeping." Hovnanian is writing down another kind of survival guide—a verbal and visual handbook that she created as a child with the help of her mother's instructions, and is only now recording in the form of liquor labels and paintings. On another bottle, the paper of the label is blank, but the artist paints a beautiful watercolor of a car and writes the text, "MOTHER Get in the car." These delicate drawings, full of strong emotions, have a loveliness about them that belies the situations they depict.

In her essay "On Keeping a Notebook," Joan Didion suggests that "we are well advised to keep on nodding terms with the people we used to be, whether we like them or not." Hovnanian embraces rather than nods at her distant self. In *Happy Hour*, she re-enters her childhood, not to sensationalize it, but to see it once again and try to know it. Her childhood friends gave her the name Ray Lee because she was interested in activities that were thought to be traditionally "male." This is the second part of Hovnanian's three-part exhibition *The Women's Trilogy Project*. The first part dealt with our addiction to technology and nature deficit disorder, and the third part will deal with purity. *Happy Hour* is perhaps the most directly personal of the three. She revisits her family and southern culture, pulling away the curtain to confront what she thought she must hide those many years ago.

GET IN THE















THE

WALKER





GOOD BREEDER



Questionable







GOOD BREEDER







"Look Jane," said Dick
"Here is something funny
can you guess what it is?"
"Oh yes," said Jane
"I can guess
I can guess what it is
this will help me find Father"







"Look here" said Sally

One is for Dick

One is for Tim

Three are for Me



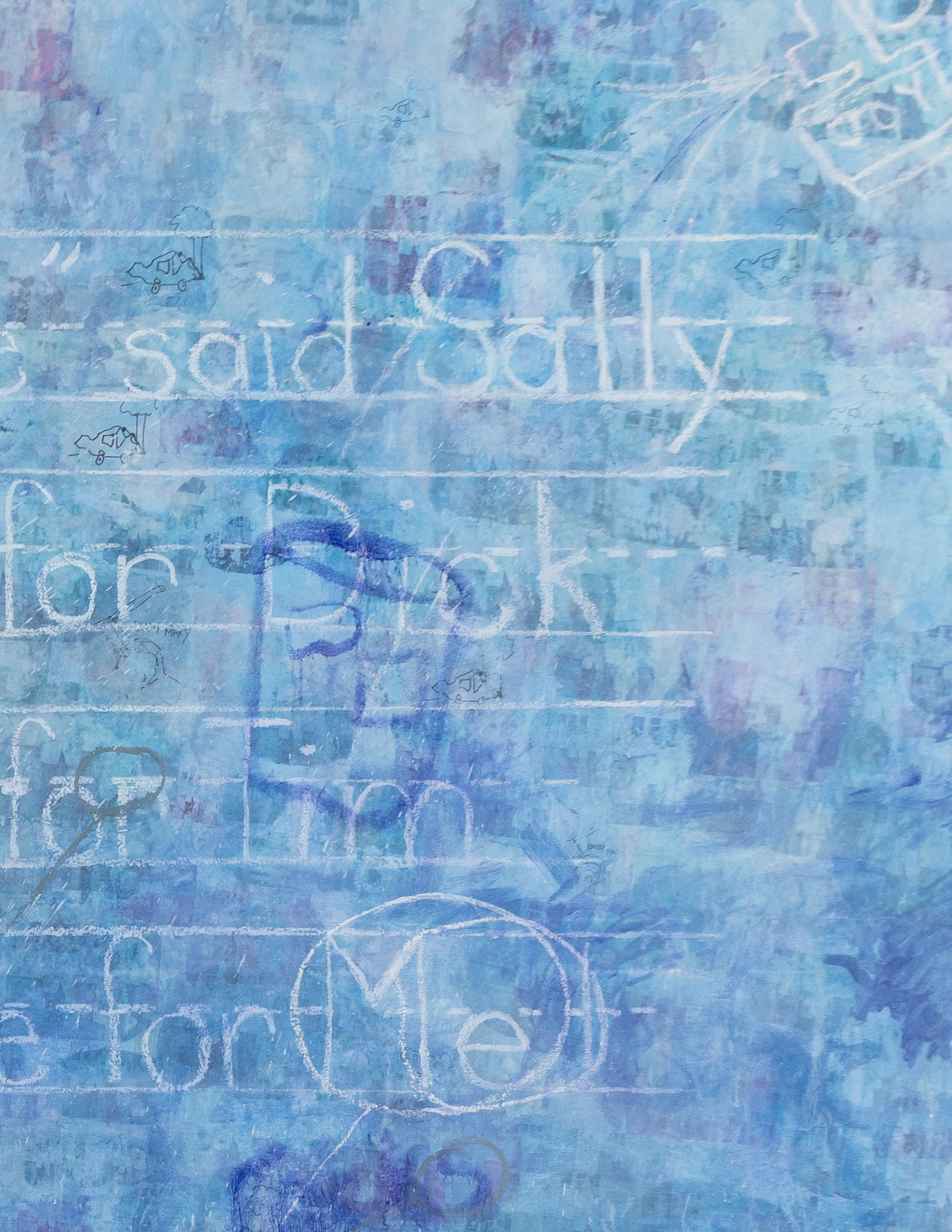


LOOK UP

One is

One is

Three are



Said Sally

for Back

for

e for Me







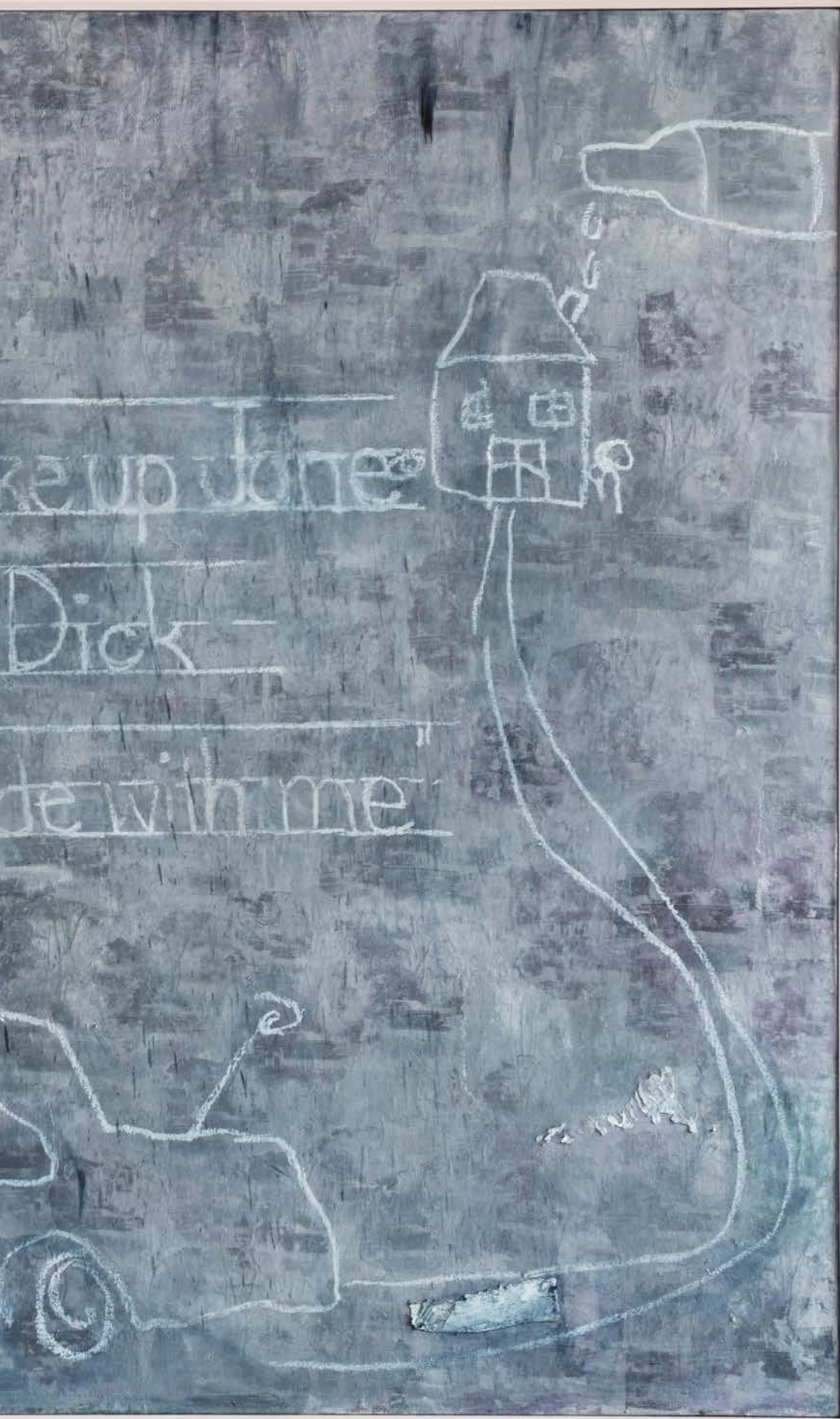


Mother said ^{RM} Wake

wake up

Come for a ride





Makeup Jane













THIS IS SUSIE
HE GIVES
A GOOD HEAD

ON MY
BRED WIRE
THATFUL LIFE
YOU TOUCH

ON MY
PART WHE
E IS DRUM

EVERY DAY
DRINK
ELLING

MA
IN
WAY
AND B
ANY

STIP

TURN OFF THE LIGHTS

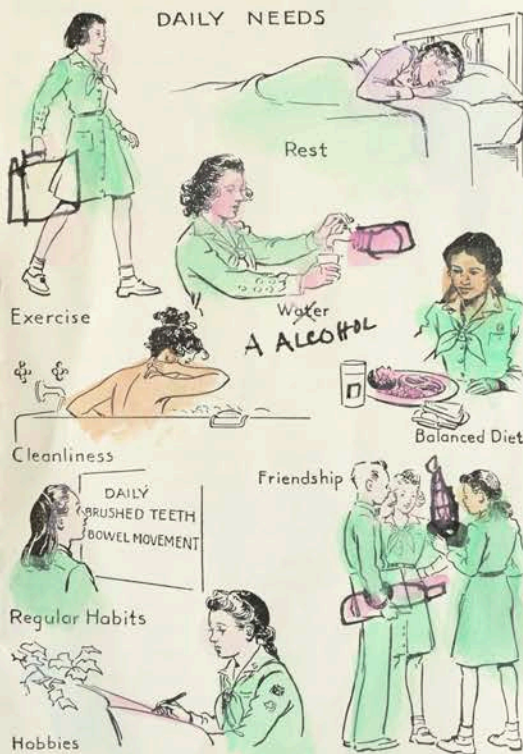
Usually lamp to good advantage *

A countless and thoughtful thing to do is to place your lamp where you and another member of your family can see it. This is especially true when you are sleeping.

SO HE THINK YOU ARE SLEEPING

8. Make a design in two or more colors of some article that it will be made of raffia, such as a basket, tray, dress accessory.
9. Make a design on paper of some article that can be made of husks, rushes, pine needles, grasses, or vines, such as a mat, hat, doll, chair seat, basket, tray, brush.
10. Weave a simple basket of prepared material, such as reed, rushes, raffia, and so forth, using your own design. Know where these materials may be purchased or obtained.
11. Make a woven reed tray or basket with a wooden base.
12. Know how to gather and prepare for use two different materials used in basketry.

DAILY NEEDS



telephone without annoying the family or giving the operator gray hair? Can you ride in a trolley car, bus, or train without stepping all over people or taking up more than your share of space? Do you help new students and troop members to get started? Do you do your share to keep your yard looking neat and pretty? Do you put your orange peels and papers in a trash can instead of throwing them on the street or on the sidewalk? Do you keep off of grass that is not supposed to be walked on? Do you respect other people's property? There are dozens of questions like these that you can ask yourself. The truthful answers will give you some idea of how helpful you are to your community.

YOUR SERVICE TO YOUR COMMUNITY

When Juliette Gordon founded Girl Scouting in this country, she had her community and country in mind. She knew that a group of girls making a Promise such as ours and acknowledging it in Girl Scout Leaves would be ready to learn how to give service to their community and country.

A good member of a troop is one who has ideas things to do that will be worth while to other people. It would be impossible to tell you in one short chapter all the ways in which you can serve your community and country. All through this book you will find different paths that lead toward good citizenship. In nearly every one of the Girl Scout badges you will find ideas that suggest community service. Read the ones in the Community Life field first and see where they lead you. Look in Homemaking chapter to find many ways to improve your home citizenship, in the Health and Safety chapter for

IF YOU ARE THIRSTY

Most experienced hikers drink little water while walking. A sensible hiker *never* drinks water from an untested supply. Unless you are sure you can get safe water, either take the water with you or purify it on the spot.



to see that everything has its place and is in it. Suggest to your parents any inexpensive handy articles that might be added.

12. Explain how to set up any three of the following in wood or plaster: drapery fixtures, cup hooks, picture hooks, clothes hooks, towel rods, shelves.

13. Know how to oil any two of the following: an electric fan, sewing machine, door hinges, lawn mower, mechanical toy or implement.

14. Find out why and how windows, screens, awnings, storm doors, or storm windows are stored. Mark your own family or another family to mark any of them with appropriate number buttons and to recondition any of these for use during another season.

15. Help to arrange in orderly fashion the storage space in an attic, garage, or cellar.



To earn this badge, do eleven of these activities. Two activities are required—the one starred and 9, 10, or 14.

* 1. Discuss in a troop meeting what makes a good hostess, what part of the role she plays is just the same as everyday getting along with people, what part is special responsibility.

2. Act out the way to introduce new friends to each other, to older people, boys to girls in various situations. Give a bit of the conversation that might follow the introduction.

3. Discuss good conversation and practice it at different times such as with a newly introduced person, your school principal or teacher, your family at dinner, a troop visitor, a family friend.

4. Make up a game, quiz, or skit on points you think every girl should know about such things as: table manners; meeting people; courtesy toward your family and friends; responsibilities as a hostess and as a guest.

5. Have a question box in which anyone can drop questions that puzzle her on social behavior or social ways of doing

a wooden train of cars (without track), truck, wagon; digging tools.

From four years up, a child likes to make things and things around the house.

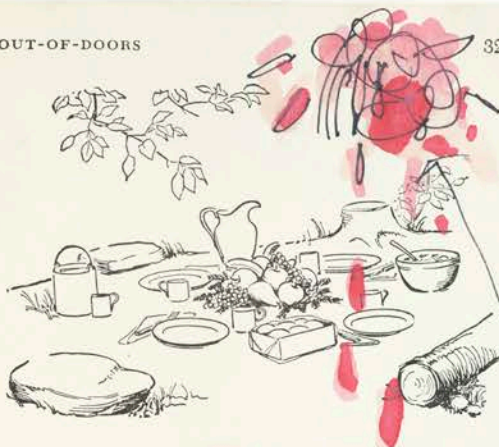
A child likes books and should be taught how to handle them carefully. A child likes the things he sees out-of-doors, the birds and insects, animals and flowers. Help him to know more about them and to go right on liking them.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Many persons in your community and in the whole country are helping every day to protect you, your family, and others.

UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

In the Constitution of the United States provision is made for the Federal Government to help carry out measures relative to public health. The principal health agency of the Government is the United States Public Health Service. Some of the duties of this agency are: to prevent the bringing of disease from other countries; to prevent the spread of disease between states in this country; to study the cause and prevention of diseases dangerous to public health; to supervise the purity of products in interstate commerce; to assist state and local health departments; and to give medical service to certain persons. The United States Public Health Service has research laboratories and quarantine stations at all seaports handling foreign commerce.



Hikers' dining room

It should be one group's very definite job to see that the fire is OUT. It is everyone's job to see that the cook-out place is left clean and neat.

Going on an overnight hike is one of the things Girl Scouts look forward to doing. To enjoy an overnight hike you should know how to sleep comfortably on the ground. Learn how to make your bed properly and find a level place to put your bed. Remove sticks and pebbles. It is sometimes a good idea to scoop out a shallow hole for your hips. If you use a mosquito net, see that it is securely fastened. Put a groundsheet or poncho under the bed. Have half your blankets underneath you and half on top of the bed. Learn how to make an envelope bed. See *Campcraft ABC's* (Girl Scouts, Catalog No. 20-609, \$1).

cents). Singing and dancing have always been easily combined, and you will find these singing games an easy way to learn simple steps and formations.

You will find that your folk dancing will be more fun if there are boys who enjoy doing it with you. Some camps have grand times with neighboring boys' camps at square dances. Perhaps your nearest Boy Scout troop or the boys you know in school would like to join you in the fun of a barn dance or international dancing party.

Folk dance forms are steadily growing in popularity in all social dancing. For instance, there are the tango, the rumba, the polka, the square dances, and the "open formation" that are being done more and more.

Ballroom and modern dancing both draw from folk dance forms, just as art music uses folk tunes. Whatever your interest in music or dancing is, maybe it will be keener if you know something about folk music and folk dancing.

BALLROOM OR SOCIAL DANCING

Dancing is one of the favorite pastimes when boys and girls get together in groups. Every girl wants to dance well in order to feel at ease and to have a good time.

Girl Scouts in their troops often learn dancing as a group. A phonograph can furnish the music, and you can practice different steps over and over. If girls only are dancing together, take turns leading. When you are dancing with a boy, he always leads, so you do not want to form the habit of doing it.

While learning how to dance, you will certainly want to know what kinds of clothes would be appropriate for

feet. Pace it ten times, using your normal walking step. Start each time with your toe on the line. Count the number of steps you used each time and average them. One hundred feet equals 1200 inches. Divide 1200 inches by your average number of steps and you have the length of one pace. You know then that every time you take a normal step you cover that many inches. For example, if your average number of steps is 50, divide 1200 inches by 50 and you have 24 inches, which is your pace.

PERSONAL MEASUREMENTS

Your own measurements are a measuring scale often used. Find out the following about yourself.



WHICH JOINT IS EXACTLY ONE INCH?

TIME AND DISTANCE

Practice timing yourself to see how long it takes you to walk a mile, comfortably, over fairly level ground. This will give you the rate at which you walk and will help you judge both time and distance.

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CHAPTER 10

HOMEMAKING

A happy home is one in which all the members of the family take pleasure in sharing their experiences and their abilities.

Your home may be one room, a small apartment, a modest cottage, or a large house with many rooms. Whatever the size, the happiness of the home depends upon the skill and kindness of the people who live in it.

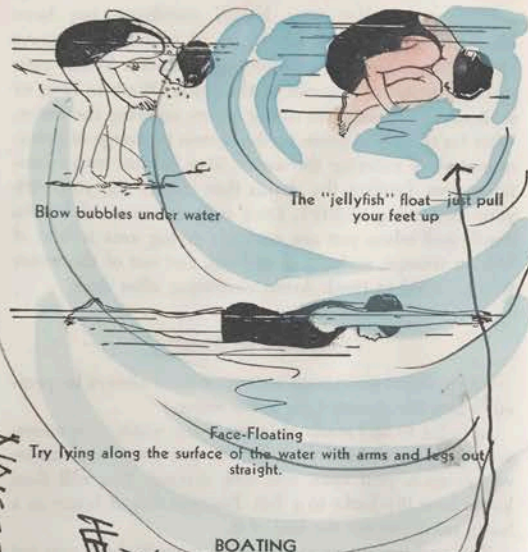
You have a golden opportunity to put into practice the Girl Scout Laws and to show the members of your family that Girl Scouting is a part of everyday living. A big share in homemaking comes from small things, such as being courteous to the other members of the family, being kind and gay with the younger children, seeing small jobs to be done without being told, and doing the daily jobs cheerfully.

Homemaking is no longer done by guesswork. All the material that science and art have gathered are yours to call upon.

Homemaking is an art, a profession, and a business. It belongs to every girl and woman in some degree. Start now to train yourself.

COOKING

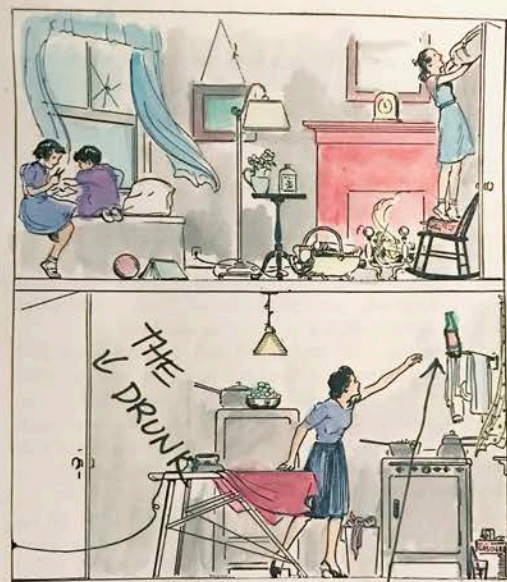
Everyone appreciates a good cook. Being a good cook also means that you know what foods are best to eat and economical to buy. A successful cook keeps in practice.



When you know how to swim and how to take care of yourself in deep water, you are ready to learn something about boating. You will probably begin with a rowboat, progress to a canoe, then to a sailboat.

SAFETY RULES FOR BOATING AND CANOEING

Be sure boats and canoes are in good condition and use them only with the permission of the leader in charge.



Hazards in a Home

How many hazards can you find in this picture? See page 160 for a list of them.

HIDE IT

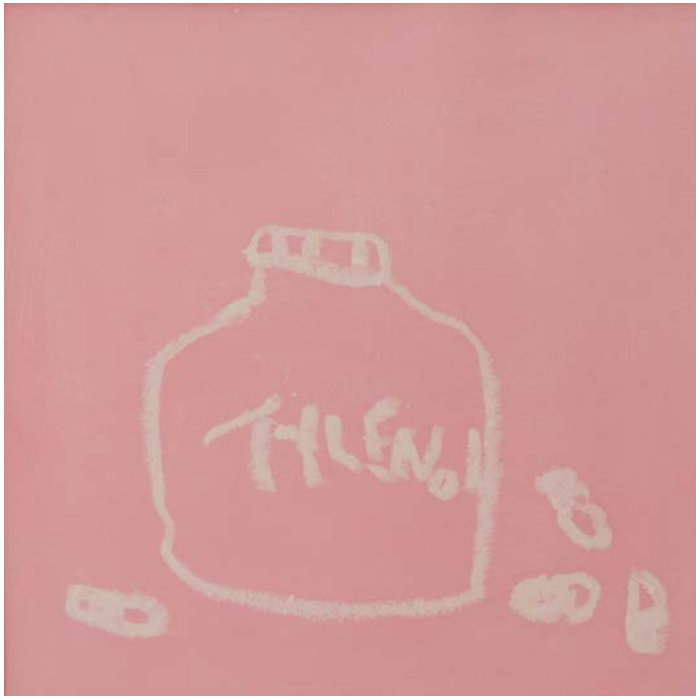


hand Job



SLUTTY







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

- | | |
|------|---|
| 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 *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

Pink Panty Dropper, 2018
Mixed media on canvas
96 x 60 inches

Blue Gin Fizz, 2018
Mixed media on canvas
59 inches diameter

Death in the Afternoon, 2018
Mixed media on canvas
96 x 108 inches

Pink Lady, 2018
Mixed media on canvas
132 x 97 inches

Tall, Dark, and Handsome, 2018
Mixed media on canvas
61 x 84 inches

Blue Valium, 2018
Mixed media on canvas
96 x 108 inches

Blue Monster, 2018
Mixed media on canvas
60 x 70 inches

Dark and Stormy, 2018
Mixed media on canvas
60 x 70 inches

House of Empty Bottles, 2018
Installation of metal, wood,
chalkboard, barbed wire,
glass bottles with labels
illustrated in watercolor,
pastel, and ink

Drinks on the House, 2018
Gouache, oil pastel
7.5 x 7.5 inches

Hand Job, 2018
Gouache, oil pastel
7.5 x 7.5 inches

Vanity Stool, 2018
Gouache, oil pastel
7.5 x 7.5 inches

Hide and Seek, 2018
Gouache, oil pastel
7.5 x 7.5 inches

Slutty I, 2018
Gouache, oil pastel
7.5 x 7.5 inches

Bimbo I, 2018
Gouache, oil pastel
7.5 x 7.5 inches

Is She or Isn't She?, 2018
Gouache, oil pastel
7.5 x 7.5 inches

Joy, 2018
Gouache, oil pastel
7.5 x 7.5 inches

Shopping Flask, 2018
Gouache, oil pastel
7.5 x 7.5 inches

Wine Flu, 2018
Gouache, oil pastel
7.5 x 7.5 inches

Getaway Car, 2018
Gouache, oil pastel
7.5 x 7.5 inches

Cheap Tarte, 2018
Gouache, oil pastel
7.5 x 7.5 inches

Just One More, 2018
Gouache, oil pastel
7.5 x 7.5 inches

Slut II, 2018
Gouache, oil pastel
7.5 x 7.5 inches

Moving Violation, 2018
Gouache, oil pastel
7.5 x 7.5 inches

Sin, 2018
Gouache, oil pastel
7.5 x 7.5 inches

Q
QUEER

LOOSEN UP



Printed on the occasion of the exhibition:

RACHEL LEE HOVNANIAN HAPPY HOUR

April 19 - May 31, 2018
Leila Heller Gallery, New York, NY

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www.rachelleehovnanian.com



bimbo

