

The Feminist Biennial

Ashley Wynn: Juror Statement

Amidst a tenuous socio-political climate, freedoms associated with gender and identity remain in contention, and thus feminism has become an active player within cultural discourse. The 21st century's digital age introduced a new kind of feminism, a fourth wave which affords a less formalized yet increasingly accessible approach to activism. Now spanning a global sphere, this new age of feminism aims to address the broader issues related to a more inclusive sense of equity and agency of self. While many would choose to argue that this new radicalized fourth wave conflicts with feminist ideologies of the past, the oppressions pertaining to stereotyped roles, ancillary positions in society, and a limited sense of autonomy remain consistent. And alongside that comes a shared desire to create space for structural change, equality, and a realized sense of self. Thus, it felt pertinent to consider the multiplicities of an inherited feminist legacy, the ever-evolving intersectional role of womanhood and how it is shaped by a generational feminist consciousness.

The Biennial features works by x number of female and non-binary artists, providing viewers the opportunity to engage with distinct statements of contemporized feminine identity. Building upon prior critical engagements with the dynamics of gender roles and sexuality, the works exhibited provide an evolved authentication of the feminine experience. Textile works reference the longstanding relationship between women and craft, a recontextualization of obligatory convention and domesticity, presented as a communal space through which to articulate shared traumas and triumphs. The literal weaving of form and feeling, freedom and function, sensuality and strength. The presence of sinewy bare figures is evocative of classical images of leisured nudes throughout the canon, yet is offered through the female gaze, allowing for a renewed sense of authority over representation, one that aims to empower rather than objectify. Biomorphous sculptural works present unapologetic visual metaphors for sexual empowerment, liberation, and expression, a gateway to consider both the physicality and mentality of the body, the true site of feminist practice.

Each work presents both a timeless and timely expression of the pluralism of feminism, a provocative amalgamation of intersectional pursuits of equality, liberation, and autonomy, upending preconceived ideologies of what it means to be a woman. The resultant conversation invites an active exploration into a broader spectrum of experiences and perspectives, dynamically opposing binary boundaries imposed upon genders and identification. Figurative explorations of physicality and identity meet abstract, conceptual investigations to present revised perspectives of contemporary feminism, based not in a single narrative of womanhood, but through a broadened spectrum of experiences.

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