

PREVIEW: Massachusetts

DOMESTIC MEMORY: A GROUP EXHIBITION

Abigail Ogilvy Gallery • Boston, MA • abigailogilvy.com • Through June 1, 2018

Domestic Memory is a group show of mixed-media works by Marisa Adesman, Lisa A. Foster, Janet Loren Hill and Julianne Wallace Sterling—all female, all figurative artists, all offering personal reflections of what it means to be a woman today. This is an emotionally honest show with stunning works.

The title comes from Hill's artist statement, "I purposefully use textile techniques for their use by female activist groups, their embodiment of domestic memories, and metaphorical manifestation of two threads/ reeds/ grids entangled together to make a whole." Each artist in the show employs unusual materials. And each work reflects the artists' belief that materials, in this case household materials, hold memories and have stories to tell.

Hill's *Towel Tight Between Your Red Hot Thighs* is an oil on canvas and foam construction meant to resemble a mattress on the side of the road. In her series, *I think I married the back of your head, at least it doesn't yell much* she creates her husband's likeness and projects her fantasies—drawn from



Lisa A. Foster, *David and Goliath*, 2017, cotton reproduction quilting fabrics, acrylic and medium on canvas, 60 x 60". Courtesy of Abigail Ogilvy Gallery.

trays. In Foster's *Evoking Eleanor*, she cuts and patches colonial and Civil War era reproduction fabrics into her silhouettes. In Adesman's hyper-realistic paintings, the identities of the figures are masked through "frosting" or colorful cellophane with an eye, or some other detail, revealing the figure is a human.

Though these artists aren't specifically responding to the #MeToo movement, or our political times, it's impossible to view the show without thinking about the conversations swirling around us. The metaphors might seem obvious: women on meat trays, a postcoital scene on a mattress, a woman's face obscured by gobs of dripping frosting. But there is nothing simple about this show. In Foster's *David and Goliath* where she presents her silhouette as both underdog and warrior, David has Goliath slung over "her" shoulders and confronts the viewer with her power. You don't dare look away.

—Sarah Baker

movies, books, her own life—onto the back of his head using knit-wrapped upholstery foam, yarn, string or push pins. Sterling's *Repose* series (inspired by Wallace Stegner's novel, *Angle of Repose*) includes six Sharpie drawings of women in various provocative poses on Styrofoam meat

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KLIMT AND SCHIELE: DRAWN

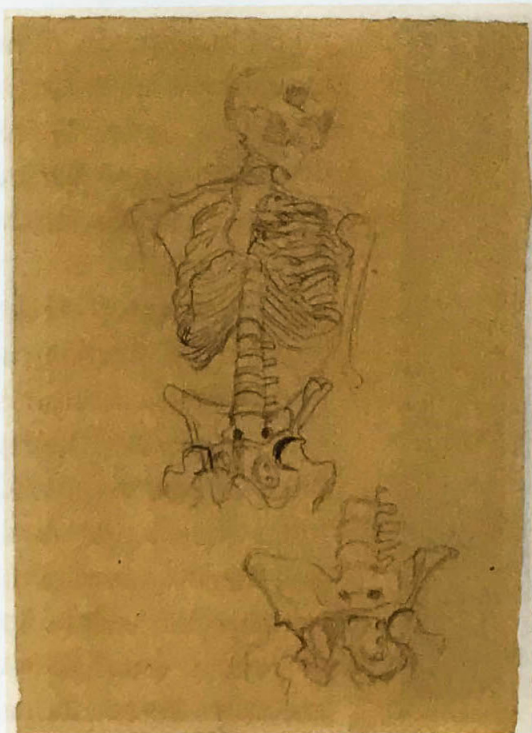
Museum of Fine Arts • Boston, MA • mfa.org • Through May 28, 2018

The drawings of canonical Austrian modernists

Gustav Klimt (1862-1918) and Egon Schiele (1890-1918), on view in *Klimt and Schiele: Drawn*, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

explore more than the relationship—personal and aesthetic—between the two. Although Klimt was nearly 30 years Schiele's senior, each artist was subject to the rotational forces

of the time, pushing against the establishment with depictions of the human form that defied convention. Each came to explore the body as both vessel and metaphor for the human experience, including sexuality.



Gustav Klimt, *Two Studies of a Skeleton (Studies for the Transfer Sketch for Medicine)*, (Austrian, 1862-1918), about 1900, black chalk on wrapping paper. Albertina, Vienna. Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

As exhibition curator Katie Hanson put it, when Vienna's Albertina Museum reached out to the MFA to present one of three exhibitions of rarely loaned drawings to celebrate the centennial of the artists' deaths, "We came up with the solution of telling parallel but separate stories." What joins those stories, Hanson says, is the notion of "making the inner life visible."

In Klimt's *Two Studies of a Skeleton (Studies for the Transfer Sketch for Medicine)* (circa 1900) created as part of a commission that Klimt ultimately refused, a skeleton, truncated and floating in space, breathes life into death through the sideways thrust of the head.

Schiele also depicted the human form

unconventionally—and like Klimt, in truncated form, floating, without visual context. In contrast to Klimt's often melodic, sensual lines, Schiele's drawings capture essences through exaggerated detail: an overly large ear, for instance, or a grossly elongated arm. His use of watercolor adds another layer of emotional substance. In *Self-Portrait in Orange Jacket* (1913) the figure is draped in boxy fabric; one skeletal hand props up his head, the other is curled into a Cubist fist. Even his hair exudes emotion: staccato marks echo the multi-hued, lined forehead. He is the thinker, the tormented lover. Because Schiele died so tragically young, one easily makes connections to another more recent wunderkind who painted as if his fingers were fused with an electric charge—Jean-Michel Basquiat.

The compelling aesthetic contributions of both Klimt and Schiele are provocatively introduced here, even though Schiele's career was so much shorter. *Drawn* is an exhibition to savor.

—Julianna Thibodeaux