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SHOTGUN REVIEWS

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The Intersectional Self at the 8th Floor

Shotgun Reviews are an open forum where we invite the international art community to contribute timely, short-format responses to an exhibition or event. If you are interested in submitting a Shotgun Review, please click [this link](#) for more information. In this Shotgun Review, Jasa McKenzie reviews The Intersectional Self at 8th Floor Gallery.



Andrea Bowers. *Throwing Bricks (Johanna Saavedra)*, 2016; archival pigment print; 77 1/2 x 57 in.
Courtesy of the Artist and Andrew Kreps Gallery, New York.

As more feminist marches, protests, and gatherings organize in the wake of the new U.S. administration, critiques of contemporary feminist approaches also emerge. Two of the largest

issues that feminism faces today are the exclusion of transgender and non-White cultural perspectives and representations. *The Intersectional Self* at 8th Floor Gallery answers the call for the need of these inclusions by assembling myriad identities to center the conversation around feminism and gender.

Andrea Bowers' *Trans Liberation: Beauty in the Street (Johanna Saavedra)* (2016) photograph features Saavedra, a trans Latina immigrant activist, walking down a street in Los Angeles, throwing a symbolic brick. Its portrayal of a woman-identified person with multiple other melding identities is a striking example of communicating resilience and intersectionality. The piece, which recalls the Stonewall Riots, exemplifies that the ongoing fight for equality will not be forfeited until it is achieved for all.

The exhibition also utilizes a wide range of media, including video, photography, sculpture, collage, and printmaking, to explore how femininity and thus masculinity have morphed along with definitions of gender identity in recent history. A majority of the works in the show, whether representational or abstract, are self-portraits, hence the "Self" in the exhibition title. In *Thump* (2016), renowned feminist Martha Wilson dresses in drag as a sickeningly orange, vastly double-chinned Donald Trump. Giving the thumbs-up sign, while standing in front of a classical statue with the word "Force" engraved onto it, Wilson utilizes herself as a feminist icon to ironically subvert the image of the oppressor.

Ana Mendieta also manipulates the gender boundary through *Untitled (Facial Hair Transplants)* (1972), in which she adheres a man's beard to her own face as he shaves it off throughout a series of photographs, defying what is expected of male and female surface appearances. Genesis Breyer P-Orridge's piece, *My Funny Valentine* (2013), depicts an ambiguous, kaleidoscope-like up-skirt shot in which red panties are remnant of a repeating heart shape. The inclusion of P-Orridge also promotes that gender and the body itself are not solidified concepts, but malleable vessels for the person, which exists only in the mind.

The Intersectional Self sets a precedent on how to present a feminist exhibition. The widely Instagrammed, White cis-woman in her bright pink Pussy Hat should not be the poster-image of the contemporary feminist movement. This exhibition addresses women who are trans, queer, immigrants, and of color as the engine of real change.

The Intersectional Self will be on view at 8th Floor in New York through May 19, 2017.

Jasa McKenzie is a curator and artist based in New York City. She is currently a fellow in Curatorial Practice at the School of Visual Arts.