



Life Bearings / Georgia Scherman Projects

My recent visit to Georgia Scherman Projects left me feeling that I had bore witness to the most fragile edges and dustiest corners of the heart of Woman. The warm afternoon sunlight that streamed into the pristine white space was sublime. The rhythmic I Love You's of Vessna Perunovich's video installation "Finding Love" pulsed with passion. And the contrasting red elements that trickled throughout in the form of thread, line drawings, and dipped paper edges, pumped a vigour into the space that is essential in both life and art.

Life Bearings, curated by Magda Gonzalez-Mora, brings together the works of five artists alike in their womanhood, dissimilar in their places of origin. Each offers a conceptual, autobiographical narrative that confronts the realities of love and looks toward their modification by means of endurance, patience, and sacrifice. Collectively, these emotional narratives suggest that a woman's call to bear life is universal.

Elsa Mora, Core #1 and Core #2, 2016, digital print, string, canvas, 60" x 40" each.
Photo: Vanessa Zeoli

Two works in a series stand apart in the otherwise colourless exhibition. Elsa Mora's "Core #1" and "Core #2" are composed of a digital print of a pig's heart on canvas. The Cuban born artist cites sacrifices she witnessed in childhood such as the slaughtering of swine and the imprisonment of her father. An urgency to survive is discernible in these works, as is a longing for presence. Over the top of each photograph is a Cuban coat of arms, one of which is rendered in a meticulous etching, the other with tangled thread and far less precision.



Elsa Mora, Core #1, 2016, digital print, string, canvas, 60" x 40". Photo: Vanessa Zeoli

Mora bears even more in her "Weightless" series. The multi-media works incorporate self-portraits taken during a challenging period in the artist's life when she felt compelled to turn inward and confront the human mind. Heaviness and lightness are at play in these pictures. While "Weightless #3" uses stones to convey life's burdens, "Weightless #5" takes flight with a translucent paper moth wing. Mora's work certainly has a charming aesthetic but at its essence is tender, honest, and capable of inspiring self-awareness.

Elsa Mora, Weightless #5 (left) and #3 (right) 2016, mixed media (photos, cotton thread, paper), 20" x 20" framed each. Photo: Vanessa Zeoli

"Finding Love", a video by Vessna Perunovich is included in the exhibition as well as "Moments of Consequence", an ongoing project consisting of a series of figurative red ink drawings. Each work captures a life-defining moment that provides insight into the human condition. While some depict interpersonal relationships, many display a solitary figure in relationship with the environment and self. There is universality in this variety of emotion as there is vitality in it's rendering.

Vessna Perunovich, Moments of Consequence, 2010-ongoing, watercolour paper, ink, 16" x 12" each. Photo: Vanessa Zeoli

Installation view with Vessna Perunovich's work. Photo: Vanessa Zeoli

Anila Rubiku uses chain imagery to explore the pleasures and pains of love relationships. Having the capacity to lift and protect, chains can also be used to control and punish. In her "Consequences of Love" series, silkscreen impressions illustrate heaps of chains accompanied by American blues lyrics. "Set Me Free," "I Can Hardly Speak," "Why Do Fools Fall In Love" convey the heavy realities of some love affairs, alluding to themes around domestic violence. In contrast, "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Lover" is a testament to the lightness of some other kinds of love. What appears to be a weighty chain is in fact a plastic replica and measures less than a tenth of an ounce.

Anila Rubiku, 250 grams of love; 8,82 ounces of love series: He Ain't Heavy, He's My

Lover, 2016, plastic, paint, 39.5" x 10.25" x 6.75". Courtesy of Georgia Scherman Projects

Drawing on her experiences living in the West Coast, Carly Butler's work looks at themes of physical and psychological survival. "Certain mistakes are of frequent occurrence" is a truly striking work of resin that takes the form of an anchor and suspends in mid air. When met by the sun's rays from the overhead skylight, it appears illusory. A sense of longing is established for something or someone to swoop down, grab hold of us, and assume the weight that often feels too heavy to bear.

Carly Butler, Certain mistakes are of frequent occurrence, 2016, resin, edition of 3, 48" x 22", detail. Courtesy of Georgia Scherman Projects

"Hourglass" and "Sphered" are two contrasting sculptures by Hyang Cho. Each is constructed from glass but while one work expands the material to establish lightness, the other compresses it to establish weight. Together they represent a dichotomy that I found runs throughout the exhibition both in practice and theme. It would seem that strength and weakness, heaviness and lightness, and absence and presence are dualities that are part of most every woman's narrative despite place of origin, experiences past, or realities present. As long as the heart continues to beat, there is opportunity to modify the future.

Hyang Cho, Hourglass, 2013, glass, 6.6" x 3.5" (left), Sphered, 2016, found glass jars, 6.5" x 6.5" right). Courtesy of Georgia Scherman Projects

Vanessa Zeoli

*Exhibition information: *Life Bearings* by Carly Butler, Hyang Cho, Elsa Mora, Vessna Perunovich and Anila Rubiku, September 9 — October 8, 2016, Georgia Scherman Projects, 133 Tecumseth Street, Toronto. Gallery hours: Wed – Fri 10am – 5 pm, Sat 11 am-5 pm.

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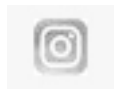
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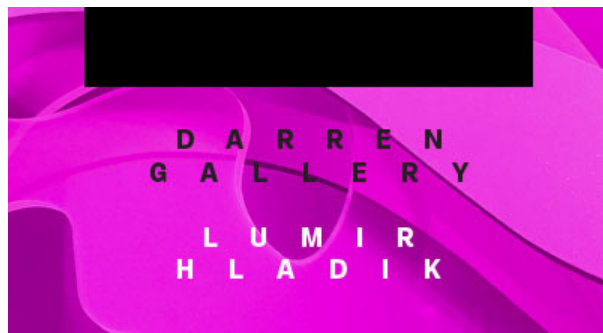
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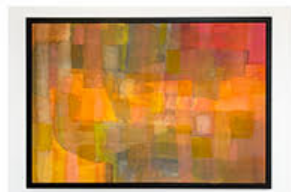
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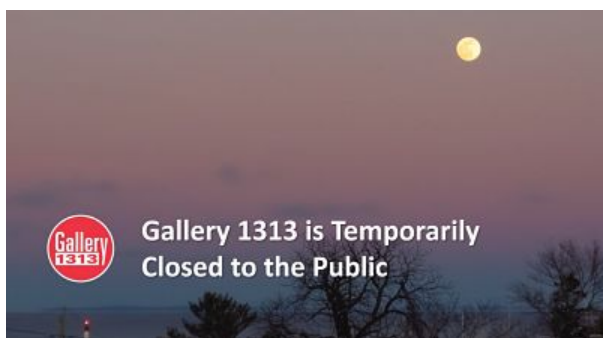


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