

# Artweek

## 'Make You Notice' at SFAC Gallery

'Cause I gonna make you see / There's nobody else here / No one like me / I'm special, so special / I gotta have some of your attention give it to me

—Chrissie Hynde/The Pretenders  
"Brass in Pocket"

The exhibition *Make You Notice*, recently on view at the San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery, draws its title from The Pretenders's 1980s hit, the one where Chrissie Hynde wails "I'm gonna make you, make you, make you notice." Curator Patricia Maloney assembled a group of four women artists who address the issues of identity, visibility, anxiety and success in a society which may still view them as the second sex. These artists use images of themselves—crawling, whining, posing—vulnerable, seductive, or challenging.

All of the artists use photographically derived imagery, either prints, in the case of Laura Swanson and Lisa Anne Auerbach, or video installations, presented by Kate Gilmore and Jenifer Wofford. *Impostor*, one of a trio of videos by Wofford, presents the artist in the guise of several women, all self-deprecating and lacking in confidence. Each character—artist, businesswoman, designer—continually puts herself down, citing lack of experience or knowledge, "not being

ready" for opportunities and not deserving any kind of reward. One, speaking of a work she has made, states "I can only see the flaws." Colorful interior design sketches for modern homes serve as backdrops for the videos and hang on the gallery walls as well. Wofford's engaging *Walking with Coffee* shows a funny series of vignettes involving the consumption of coffee, porta-potties, Children's Fairyland and an awkward visit with the character's therapist.

Gilmore performs surreal activities with funky objects which she has made. She laboriously crawls through a narrow wooden passage in *Main Squeeze*. We have a dual view—head down, as hands grope and arms strain, and from the feet up, with funky wooden clogs blocking out chunks of oddly foreshortened legs and haunches. In Gilmore's large-scale video projection, *Anything*, we once again find an aerial perspective of the artist, documenting her attempts to climb up towards the viewer. She piles rickety tables and chairs atop one another, ties them in a rather slipshod and improvisational manner with thin purple twine, and proceeds to scale the ramshackle construction—one that looks more and more like the back of a pickup on its way to the dump. In a third video piece she chews and pries her head through a star-shaped orifice in plywood. Clearly her work is about taking risks, facing challenges, and the way we often set up conditions for ourselves where we are doomed to struggle and probable failure.

Auerbach and Swanson use themselves as models for photographs that challenge us to find a meeting ground between our gaze and the artist's intent. Each take on various personas, and offer varying degrees of availability. In *Independent Women*, Auerbach, swathed seductively in a knitted banner, casts a defiant, "I dare you to come hither" glance over her shoulder, a mixed signal considering the deep rear cleavage revealed amid the banner. On display separately, the banner conveys messages of support for women with money, autonomy and power. A quartet of bicycle-related images, *Saddlesore*, finds the artist in playful, provocative, vulnerable, and even Christ-like poses accompanied by her bike, which functions rather oddly as a recurring prop on which the artist perches atop, lies beneath, or even shares a tousled bed.

Swanson's five photographic works

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