

Closing Time

Catch these two excellent shows before they close.

By Katherine Rochester krochester@philadelphiaweekly.com

***You, Me, We, She* at Fleisher/Ollman Gallery**

Featuring the work of 19 contemporary artists and artist groups who use photography, video, sculpture, publication and performance, *You, Me, We, She* explores how women organize, depict and define themselves. Julia Sherman's glass-mounted photographs lyricize a disturbing moment of denied representation. Photographing the tinny, cracked surfaces of acid-doused mirrors in a Manhattan convent, Sherman documents the perversely beautiful visual results of an attempt by nuns to root out their own vanity. While Sherman's "Un-Reflective" series of photographs glance off the surface, Fawn Krieger's "Architectural Organs" burrows deep inside the body. Arranged in a grid on lumber scavenged from a demolished Quaker meeting house, Krieger's unfired, petal-pink ceramic sculptures suggest an inventory of internal organs.

A number of pieces play with gender and its performative aspects. Francine Spiegle's large format photograph, "Untitled (3)," documents one of her recent performances—an abject cocktail of squashed food and suggestive gunk that riffs on the vernacular of horror films and porn in the name of subverting feminine stereotypes. Employing a markedly different register, Jennifer Levonian's "Rebellious Bird" uses paper-doll animation to tell the story of a female Civil War re-enactor who impersonates a transgender soldier. The narrative twists and turns and Levonian's vivid watercolors lend this quietly revolutionary story of historical drag a dissonant, homespun feel.

On the subject of passing for the gender you hope to be, a prim embroidery in "Rebellious Bird" offers this ingenious advice: "If you cannot convince them, confuse them." Levonian's creed functions as an ad hoc motto for the exhibition. Dramatizing moments in the complex history of gender construction and negotiation, *You, Me, We, She* is just confusing enough to be convincing. ■

Through March 31. Fleisher/Ollman Gallery, 1616 Walnut St. 215.545.6140. fleisherollman.com



Tammy Rae Carland's "Covered Wagon"