

Nashville Arts

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MAGAZINE

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Seeing Now at 21c MUSEUM HOTEL



FRESH PAINT

Leslie Tucker

Cumberland Gallery through April 14



MANIFESTO: Impediments in the Agile World, 2017, Photo-composite printed on Endura Metallic chromogenic paper, 34" x 24"

Each piece in this series begins with a visual dialogue between two foreground subjects. In this case, a winged brick is paired with pant legs falling out of the frame. Why do we silence ourselves, make ourselves smaller, hold ourselves back? Is it a need for safety, or a downward spiral?

The daughter of a psychiatrist, I was raised in the Boston area where my early artistic influences included *MAD Magazine's* subversiveness, television commercials, and my father's mysterious profession. From that background, my passion for satire, consumer culture, and decoding human nature emerged.

After I arrived in New York City, it was Warhol's soup cans and soap pad boxes that drew me into communication arts and consumer packaged goods design. Obsessed by psychological processes, I needed to know why people buy and

WORDS Leslie Tucker



MANIFESTO: Slapped Back, 2018, Photo-composite printed on Endura Metallic chromogenic paper, 34" x 24"

The #MeToo movement caught me by surprise. I had no idea that what many of us experience would become so public. It has forced a national reckoning. Recent allegations against powerful men have sparked a chain reaction, but this is a movement more fragile than many of us realize. It could all collapse, and we are very fearful about what perilous form it will take. I deploy several visual metaphors to signify peril: from an array of tack-side-up thumb tacks, wasps, and menacing botanicals to hanging clenched fists and dragon slayers. There will be retribution and backlash, but I also think we will look back on this moment as being formative, in the long term.

their thoughts during the consumption process. I was inspired by the idea that I could influence the thoughts and habits of many Americans by graphically manipulating images of commodities.

Today, my visual arts practice examines humanity and has evolved from exploring what we buy, to *what we buy into*. My artistic goal, like a siren's song, is to lure my audience with intricate appeal and then, upon closer inspection, to assault with disquieting content. Through juxtaposition and a photo-composite process encompassing thousands of images, I examine how we might learn to navigate our discomforts and disillusionment as a way to understanding, and perhaps transcending, our hypocrisies and our blindness.

The goal of my *MANIFESTOS* series is to illuminate our conflicts and dualities, inviting viewers to rediscover the underbelly of our humanity and social systems. Each *MANIFESTO* tableau signifies a public declaration of opinions and motives, containing "text" and image. My preferred



MANIFESTO: Supreme Majesty, 2017, Photo-composite printed on Endura Metallic chromogenic paper, 34" x 24"

Our current embroilment with demagoguery is alarming, our Republic thwarted and in chains, each gilded link a monarch's crown. A new Dark Age is upon us; Democracy is shown its cage.



surface is Endura Metallic paper; its iridescent finish and rich metallic appearance is my 21st-century nod to medieval gilding. But gilded is not golden—gilded has a sense of a patina covering something else.

As I've explored quite a few themes in this series, I've been invited to share some personal interpretations. ■

Leslie Tucker's *MANIFESTOS* is on exhibit at Cumberland Gallery through April 14. For more information, please visit www.cumberlandgallery.com. See more of Tucker's art at www.leslie-tucker.com.



MANIFESTO: Here Is Your Princess, 2017, Photo-composite printed on Endura Metallic chromogenic paper, 34" x 24"

Served up like pastry and fondled by desire. Women attract consumption whether they like it or not, so men's attention can be pleasing, annoying, or frightening. It all depends.