

Her Room / Her World

Portia Munson

September 30 to December 16, 2018

Opening Reception:

Sunday, September 30th, 3-5pm

Walnut Creek, CA – Portia Munson’s elaborate installations are akin to holding a mirror to contemporary culture’s mass consumerism and cis-normative gender norms, an experience that is at once captivating and mesmerizing. It is easy to become enveloped in Munson’s *Bedroom* (1994-2018), a room-sized space, replete with windows, and crammed with thousands of pink objects commonly marketed towards girls. In *Her Coffin* (2016), a long rectangular glass box seems ready to explode with the plastic pink bric-a-brac inside, including iconic pink ribbon refrigerator magnets and breast cancer awareness wristbands. The work is a carefully arranged reminder by Munson that even in death, women can look forward to a smothering of gendered ephemera.



Portia Munson, *Bedroom*, 1994-ongoing, found pink plastic and synthetic objects along with salvaged pink bedroom furnishings, 8x18x10 feet, image courtesy of the artist and P.P.O.W Gallery, New York.

For almost twenty-five years now, Munson has been creating artworks that fall into her series *The Pink Project*, where she systematically unpacks the engrossing aura of the color pink and its mandated symbolization of the feminine. The Bedford Gallery exhibition includes Munson’s massive installations *Bedroom* and *Constellations* along with prints, a projection, and additional sculptures from Munson’s art practice.



Portia Munson, *Her Coffin*, 2016, found pink plastic, tempered glass and table, 22.5 x 14.5 x 70 in, image courtesy of the artist and P.P.O.W Gallery, New York.

Munson’s obsession with color is intrinsically tied to her interest in found and discarded objects: cheap but evocative remnants of a dystopian commodity culture—the same culture that pushes a rose-tinted femininity onto its consumers.

In Munson’s words:

“There’s also an embedded history in a thing that’s already been used. I’ve always been intrigued by what gets thrown out, i.e. often perfectly usable things. Increasingly over time, found objects have become a way for me to comment on our material-driven lifestyle and economy... The “over-load” is a comment on the pressure we experience from our consumer-driven culture to buy more new stuff.”

Munson's shrine-like installations critique materialistic culture while simultaneously honoring discarded, plastic objects that often spark nostalgic remembrances among viewers. Memorializing forgotten or discarded objects and creatures is also central to Munson's mandala images, in which the artist meticulously arranges sacred circular forms out of picked flower petals that surround the bodies of dead birds and other animals found in her neighborhood. These photographs capture the fleeting lives of urban wildlife, as well as the devastating encroachment of human activity in rural, wild areas.

Munson's work was first displayed at the Bedford Gallery in 2014 as part of the group exhibition *The Skull Show*, which included her exquisite skull collages constructed entirely from pressed flower petals. The Bedford Gallery is thrilled to welcome Portia Munson back for her first solo show here in the Bay Area.

About the Artist

Portia Munson

Portia Munson is a visual artist working in photography, painting, sculpture, and installation. Her work has been shown internationally in major public and private exhibitions since the early 1990s. Munson's most recent solo exhibitions include *Flood* at Disjecta in Portland OR, 2018; *The Garden*, at P.P.O.W Gallery in NYC, 2017; and *Earth Rites* at NYU Langone Medical Center Art Gallery in NYC, 2017. Portia Munson holds a BFA from Cooper Union (1983) and an MFA from Rutgers University (1990), and studied at Skowhegan (1987). Munson has taught at New York University, Yale School of Art, Vassar College, and SUNY Purchase. She currently teaches at the School of Visual Arts, New York. She lives and works in Catskill, NY and is represented by P.P.O.W Gallery, NYC.

Opening Reception and Meet the Artist

Sunday, September 30th, 3-5pm. \$5 Admission.

Join us for our opening reception and complimentary wine and hors d'oeuvres. Refreshments hosted by our Bedford Gallery Guild and supported by Diablo Regional Arts Association.

Free First Tuesdays

Tuesday, October 2nd, November 6th, and December 4th, 12-5 pm

Enjoy free admission and a family-friendly, Portia Munson-inspired art activity utilizing recycled materials on each first Tuesday of the month while the exhibition is on view.

Images of artwork in *Her Room / Her World* are available in our [Electronic Press Kit](#)

General Information

Location: Inside the Leshner Center for the Arts at 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek, four blocks south of the Walnut Creek BART station.

Telephone: (925) 295-1417

Email: galleryinfo@bedfordgallery.org

Website: www.bedfordgallery.org

Admission: General \$5; Youth (13-17) \$3; Children 12 and under, free; First Tuesdays are free; Free for Bg Members.

Hours: Tuesday through Sunday, Noon to 5:00 pm. The Gallery is closed on Mondays.

Tours: To book an exhibition tour, call or email: (925)295-1416 or gallerytours@bedfordgallery.org

Bedford Gallery receives funding from the **Leshner Foundation** and the **Diablo Regional Arts Association**.
All school tours and receptions are sponsored by **DRAA**. Media sponsor: **Diablo Magazine**.

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