

Art Basel Miami Beach Meridians
December 5 - 8, 2019

Portia Munson
The Garden



P·P·O·W is pleased to present Portia Munson's abundant installation, *The Garden*, for the inaugural edition of Art Basel Miami Beach Meridians. For over two decades, Munson has created maximal installations and sculptures made from a vast array of synthetic products. *The Garden*, 1996, takes the form of a woman's bedroom densely layered with floral dresses, stuffed animals, found furniture, and a myriad of fake flowers. Seductive and repulsive, this installation provides a critical context for showcasing the range of products marketed as "female" and analyzing the limitations of gender-normative social structures. Aggregating patterns and prints that are suggestive of fertility, sexuality, and rebirth, *The Garden* simulates life and abundance, but it is also oppressive and funerary.

In the twenty years since it debuted, *The Garden* increasingly elucidates connections between hostility to feminism and the continued destruction of our environment, arguably the most pressing issues of our time. A claustrophobic den of beautiful refuse, the installation amplifies capitalism's vision of bourgeois femininity, where the act of acquiring to meet societal standards fuels the momentum of hyper-consumption and climate crisis. *The Garden* proposes that disrespect for the environment runs parallel to pervasive disdain for women, inviting viewers to meditate on the irony of manufacturing a regressive notion of beauty while simultaneously annihilating our natural world.

Portia Munson (b. 1961, Beverly, MA) lives and works in Catskill, NY. She holds a BFA from Cooper Union (1983) and an MFA from Rutgers University (1990) and studied at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (1987). Munson has taught at New York University, Yale School of Art, Vassar College, SUNY Purchase and currently teaches at the School of Visual Arts, New York.

Munson's work has been shown internationally in major public and private exhibitions since the early 1990s. Munson's most recent solo exhibitions include: *Portia Munson: Her Room/Her World* at Bedford Gallery, Walnut Creek, CA, 2018; *Flood* at Disjecta, Portland, OR, 2018; *The Garden*, at P·P·O·W, New York, NY, 2017; and *Earth Rites*, NYU Langone Medical Center Art Gallery, New York, NY, 2017. Munson's work has also been in numerous group exhibitions in the U.S. and abroad, including: *Dime-Store Alchemy* at The Flag Art Foundation, New York, NY, 2018; *Garden Dwellers* at Regina Rex, New York, NY, 2017; *Out of Site* at Chesterwood, Stockbridge, MA, 2017; *Pink Noise: Flexing the Frequency* at Girls' Club Collection, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, 2016-17; *Radical Kingdoms* at Union College Schenectady, NY, 2017; *Pink Project: Table* with P·P·O·W at Frieze London, UK, 2016; *Nature Pops* at Wave Hill, Bronx, NY, 2016; *Tie His Hands Gently* at Romeo New York, NY, 2016; *In Plain Air* at Art Omi, Omi, NY, 2016; *The Female Gaze* at Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art, Philadelphia, PA, 2012.

Recent public installations include *Pink Projects*, a multidisciplinary collection of installations, sculptures, videos, and prints presented by Art Production Fund at Rockefeller Center; a large-scale light-box at the Bryant Park subway station for NYC MTA; a permanent MTA installation at Fort Hamilton Parkway station in Brooklyn ("D" line); and a large piece at the Albany International Airport, Albany, NY. Her work has been reviewed and written about in many publications including: *The New York Times*, *Art in America*, *Harper's*, *Newsweek*, *USA Today*, *The New Yorker*, and *Artforum*.