

--psa—Liss LaFleur: *GREENER PASTURES*, opening reception March 11, 7-9pm—The exhibit is on view through April 20—press release—for immediate release---



Liss LaFleur **GREENER PASTURES**

March 11 – April 20, 2017

Opening Reception: Saturday, March 11, 7 to 9pm

Artist Talk and Closing Reception: Saturday, April 15, 3 to 5pm

Women & Their Work

1710 Lavaca St., Austin, TX 78701

Free Admission, Mon. – Fri. 10 – 6 & Sat. 12 – 5

512-477-1064

<http://www.lisslafleur.com/>

http://www.womenandtheirwork.org/upcoming_events.html?itemid=1467

Women & Their Work is pleased to present *GREENER PASTURES*, the first solo exhibition of Texas based artist Liss LaFleur. This exhibition includes five new performances documented in photographs, video, text-based prints, neon, 3D glass and leather installations.

For *GREENER PASTURES*, LaFleur mines sources specifically related to the fabricated image of the cowgirl in American culture, reclaiming this narrative as a *cowgrrrl*, to construct a new, cohesive conceptual vocabulary around queer identity, the South, and radical feminism. Opening a space for viewers to address social conditioning, *GREENER PASTURES* questions the constructs of masculinity, animal empathy, futurity, fetishization, and the role of the personal archive.

LaFleur's work often originates with the artist creating extensions of the body as props for performances to explore how history, language, and gendered expectations work to etch identity into (or out of) one's existence. Given the history of the American cowboy as one tied mythologically to notions of masculinity and Manifest Destiny, triumph of man over nature, rugged individualism over collectivity, LaFleur's newest series can be seen as a critical and playful investigation into the cowboy/cowgirl/cowgrrrl persona. Pushing the boundaries of her own body, LaFleur performs directly toward the camera, using recreated archival objects to frame a narrative that is both culturally historical and deeply personal. LaFleur's radical cowgrrrl identity is fabricated as a temporary mode of survival, an alternative way of being in the here and now.

BIO:

Liss LaFleur was born in Humble, TX in 1987. She received an MFA in Media Art from Emerson College and a BFA in Photography from The University of North Texas. Working predominantly in the genres of performance art, photography, installation art, net art and video art, LaFleur's work has exhibited both nationally and internationally in solo and juried exhibitions, film festivals, and on the web. Notable events and venues as: the TATE Modern, Cannes Court Métrage, online with PBS and POV Digital, the Boston LGBT Film Festival, and the Reykjavik Art Museum. She was selected for the 2016 Lumen Prize's long list, and is the recipient of several awards, including a 2014 Professional Development Grant from the College Art Association (CAA) and an Emerging Artist Publication Fellowship from Peripheral Visions Arts. In 2016 she was a featured artist in the Native Strategies series, "LGBTQP(performance)," and her work appeared in the second Queer Biennial at Industry Gallery in Los Angeles, CA, curated by Rubén Esparza. She is currently an Assistant Professor of New Media Art at The University of North Texas in Denton, TX. www.LissLaFleur.com

-end psa-

Liss LaFleur

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GREENER PASTURES – Artist Statement

At once delicate, luring the viewer in with just a hint of familiarity and pastiche — my work jolts viewers into a world that forces them to question the normative status quo. Incorporating feminism, body art, and archives, I produce objects as extensions of the body to queer inherited roles tied to female ideologies. Working with a wide range of materials, this has included digitally fabricated acrylic nails and teeth, traditional neon, embroidery, and video, among others.

Given the history of the American cowboy as one tied mythologically to notions of masculinity and Manifest Destiny, triumph of man over nature, and rugged individualism over collectivity, *GREENER PASTURES* can be seen as a critical, and playful investigation into the cowboy/ cowgirl persona. Each performance is produced using recreated archival objects to frame a narrative that is both culturally historical and deeply personal.

The title for this exhibition borrows its name from one of the first works made in the series. *GREENER PASTURES* (2016) was a durational performance in which my wife and I stood in an empty field for 4.5 hours wearing two handmade leather horse bridles that attached to one another with a set of human sized blinders. Cutting off all periphery, we could only look ahead, at each other, and into the distance. Together we moved together to role play, create tension, and position our bodies continuously in relation to one another.

In *GREENER PASTURES* I position my self as other to challenge a new female gaze. In *SPUR PIECE 1* (2016) this is addressed by standing on the threshold of a horses' barn yard stall at a family ranch. Using nonverbal communication, I tame my body to juxtapose dominance and surrender between a woman and equine. Initially inspired by the cowboy phrase, "Don't sit on your own spurs," for a total of 15 minutes, I kick my bare behind repeatedly wearing only a pair of handcrafted aluminum spurs tied to my feet with pale pink ballet elastic. This work is installed as a looping video performance with the original spurs that were worn, a glass replica of the spurs, and a collection of 6 digital images that document the changing bruises on my body following the performance.

Combining a glass gun-shaped candy dispenser from 1935 and an army issued FUD (Female Urination Device), I have fabricated a plastic toy-like pistol that I can use to urinate through as a form of uncomfortable playfulness and as a survival tactic in *PEESHOOTER* (2017). As a queer woman in the south, guns are often considered normal and accepted more than my own body and existence. This work is installed with a short looping video performance, and a collection of 4 pee-shooters, each individually suspended with neon as if they are being held at attention without the human body, an instructional video.

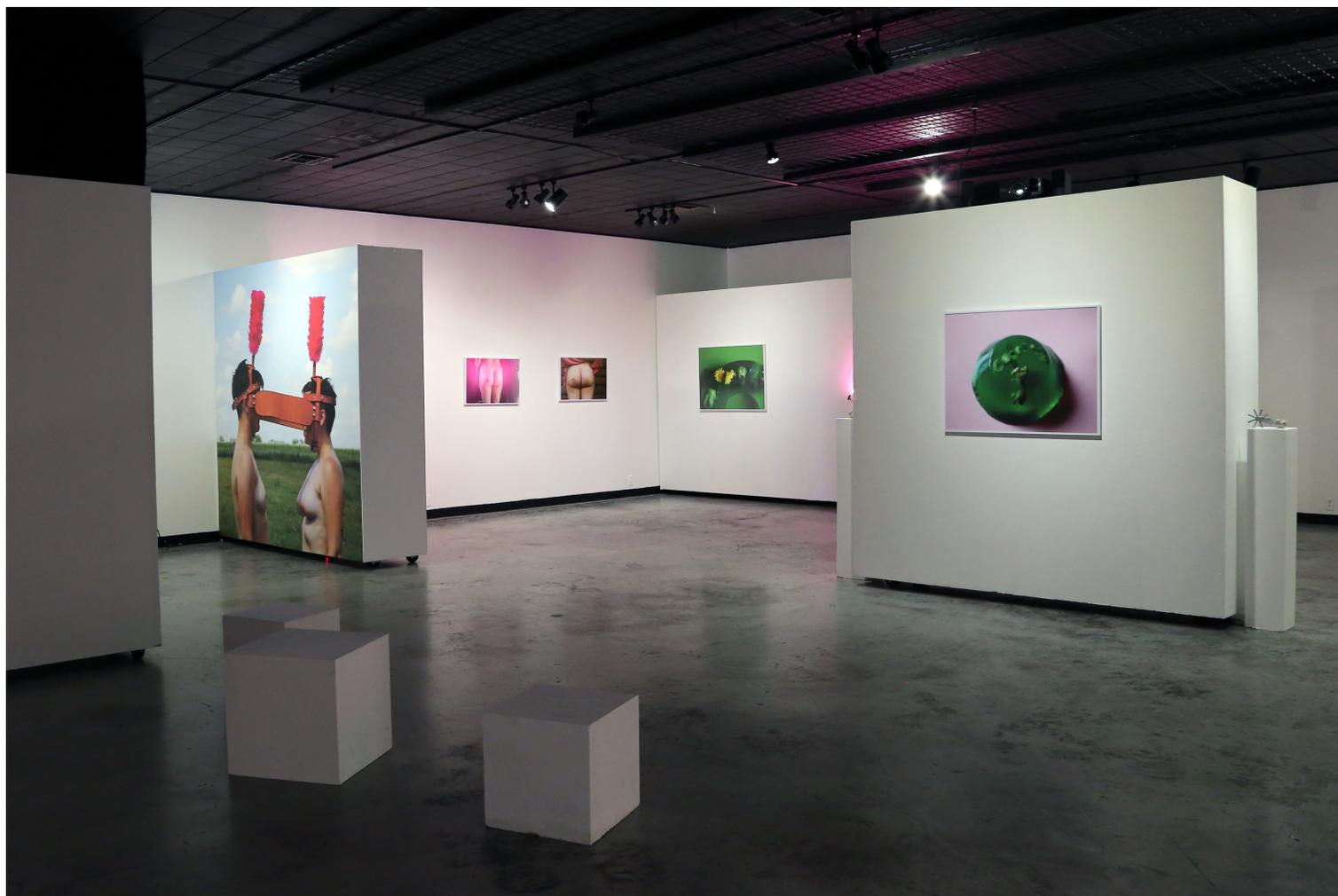
Opening a space for viewers to address social conditioning, *GREENER PASTURES* questions the constructs of masculinity, animal empathy, futurity, fetishization, and the role of the personal archive. By deconstruction the popular image of the cowgirl in American culture, and reclaiming this identity as a cowgrrrrl¹, I am able to construct a new, cohesive conceptual vocabulary around queer identity, the south, and radical feminism.

¹ The term cowgrrrrl references the Riot Grrrrl movement, an underground feminist punk movement that originated in the early 1990s that combines feminist consciousness and punk style and politics.

WORK DOCUMENTATION

Artist Interview and walkthrough of work -

Previously Installed at Women and Their Work Gallery, Austin, TX 03.2017: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alkVdXF6Gik>



Installation view of GREENER PASTURES, photographed at Women and Their Work Gallery, March 30, 2017

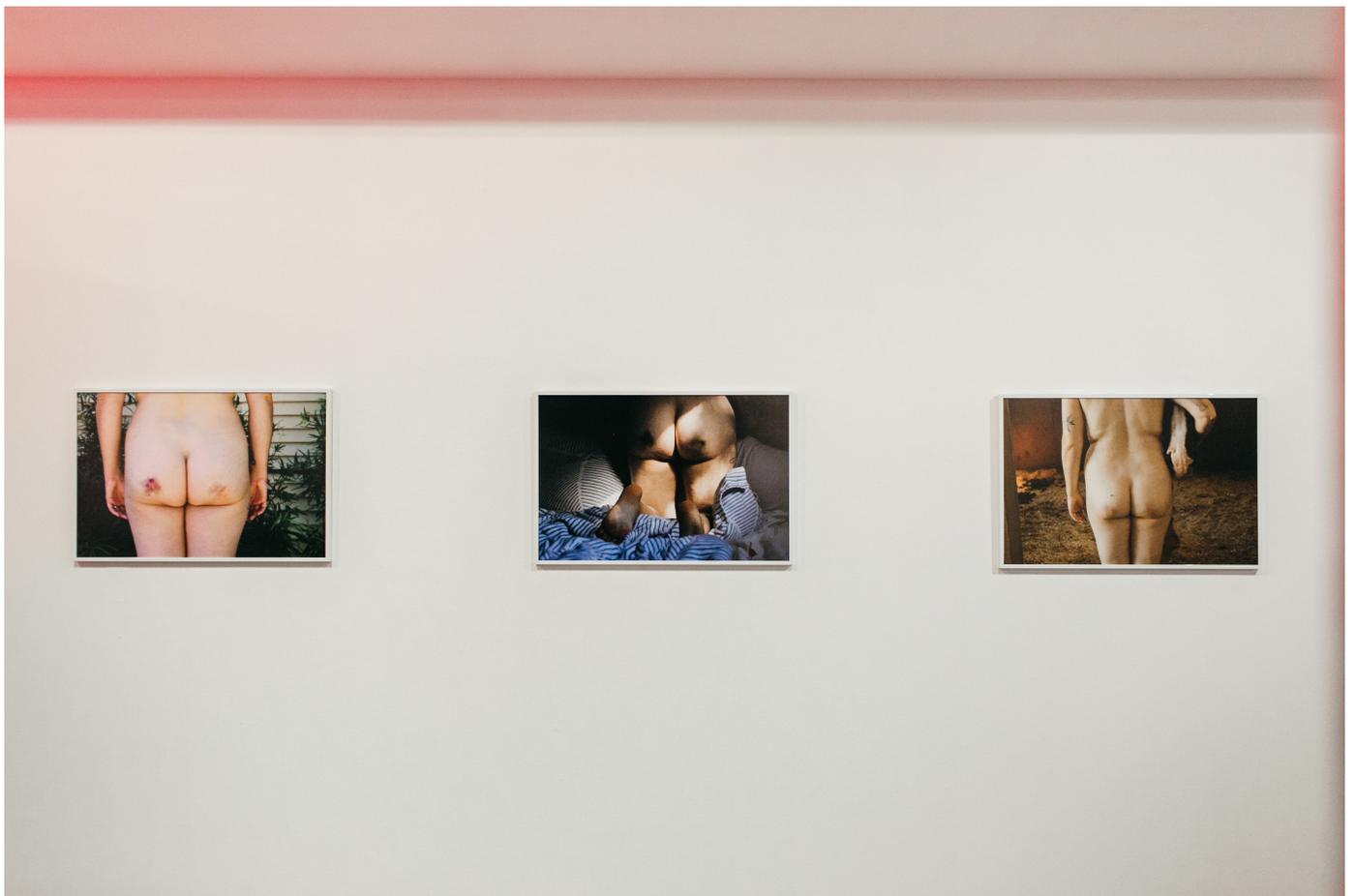


*Top: Installation view of GREENER PASTURES (2016), blinders with pair of glass heads
Bottom: NEW FRONTIERS(2017), teeth and hair barrette*





*Top and Bottom:
Installation view of SPURS (2016), looping video performance with collection of bruise prints, not pictured here: aluminum
spurs and glass spurs. Photographed at Women and Their Work Gallery, March 30, 2017*





*Top: Still from PEESHOOTER (2016), looping video performance urinating through pink pistol.
Bottom: Install of PEESHOOTER (2016) at Women and Their Work Gallery, March 2017.*

