

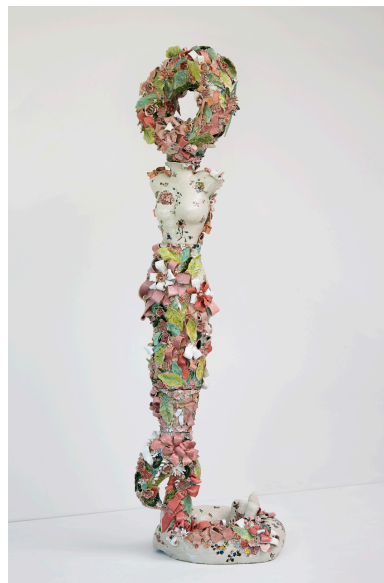
## PIPPY HOULDSWORTH GALLERY

**FRANCESCA DIMATTIO**

*Caryatid*

**Private View** Thursday 12 September

13 September - 19 October 2019



*Flamingo Caryatid*, 2019, glaze on porcelain,  
243.8 x 66 x 81.3 cm, 96 x 26 x 32 in

Pippy Houldsworth Gallery is delighted to present Francesca DiMattio's *Caryatid*, the artist's third solo exhibition at the gallery, running from 13 September to 19 October 2019. *Caryatid* comprises a series of new large-scale porcelain sculptures, taking its title from the sculpted women used as architectural columns in antiquity. These engage critically with women's traditional role of support within the domestic sphere and highlight strength drawn from femininity.

Innovative, unpredictable, humorous and violent, DiMattio's handling of clay reflects the subversive nature of her practice. Defying the fragility of porcelain, the caryatids are vast sculptures constructed with the help of a forklift, a welder, and sometimes a garlic press. Female and male, animal and human, animate and inanimate, each work is an assemblage of opposite parts, sculpted by hand and grafted together. Funereal wreaths are paired with pool floats, a bronze presidential memorial is paired with a gas tank and a mannequin torso is encrusted with rococo floral glazes. Her process, at once destructive and creative, imbues the resulting hybrid with a sense of instability. In this way, DiMattio explores conflicting expectations of womanhood, presenting feminine identity as a balancing act, precarious and full of contrasting possibilities.

The artist mines the history of sculpture and ceramics to trace how imagery moves through history. Ranging from Ming vases to disposable knick-knacks, these associations display shifting notions of value and desire. Translating each reference by hand and underlining formal similarities, she unites seemingly disparate objects, compressing time and space. Highlighting this instability of meaning, DiMattio collapses hierarchies between high and low culture, destabilising fixed perceptions of identity and highlighting the surprising closeness of opposing qualities, both cultural and material.

DiMattio's practice continues to draw on the history of craft and the decorative arts, re-evaluating their narratives through a feminist lens. Here, she expands her visual language to include the materiality of adornment. Elements typically perceived as ornamental, such as beading, knitting, and flower arranging, become viral, contradicting the forms they envelop with an ominous tone. While DiMattio uses a historically domestic medium, she surprises the viewer with towering, seemingly impossible forms. Previously motivated by function or beauty, these familiar materials are transformed by new intent, calling into question what it means to be feminine.

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Francesca DiMattio (b.1981), based in New York, is an artist whose practice encompasses painting and sculpture. She studied at Cooper Union, New York and Columbia University, New York. Solo museum exhibitions include Blaffer Art Museum, Houston and ICA Boston. Further exhibitions include Rose Art Museum; Cluj Museum; White Flag Projects; CCA Ujazdowsky Castle, Warsaw; CSW Zamek, Warsaw; New Jersey Museum of Contemporary Art; Paisley Museum & Art Galleries, Glasgow; Rachofsky House, Dallas; Zabudowicz Collection, London; Saatchi Gallery, London; The Frances Young Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Saratoga Springs; Bass Museum of Art, Miami; Wellin Museum of Art and Kimball Art Center.

DiMattio was presented the Jacob Lawrence Award by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York (2019). She will have a survey exhibition of recent work at Art Omi, Ghent, New York this year and is working towards a solo exhibition at Kentucky Museum in 2020. Her work will be included in a group exhibition at MASS MoCA, Massachusetts opening in 2021.

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