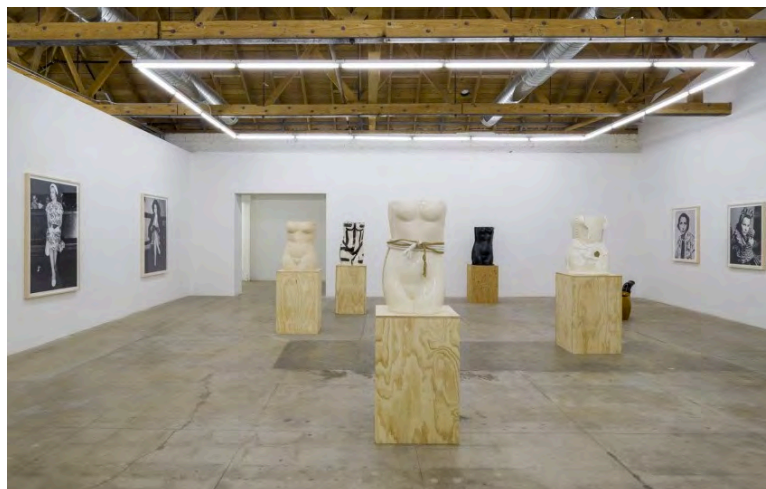


Contemporary Art Review LA, January 13, 2016

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Amy Bessone at GAVLAK by Lindsay Preston Zappas



Amy Bessone, *In the Century of Women* (installation view) (2015).

Image courtesy of the artist and GAVLAK Los Angeles.

Photo: Jeff McLane.

A woman stands in a stairwell with a playful grin, hiking up her skirt just enough to reveal her right kneecap. A book accompanying Amy Bessone's *In the Century of Women*—simply titled *The League of Divorced Women*—reveals that this woman similarly “exposed” her limbs to her then-husband's band members, prompting the couple's divorce.

Other women's stories in the book are more tragic—some don't have stories at all, their portraits accompanied instead by a harrowing blank page. Framed black-and-white photographs of these female divorcées from the '40s–'70s flank the gallery, hemming in a slew of ceramic female torsos. The busts are hollow, and tout various stylistic flourishes—some look unglazed and hand formed, others are polished and don ab-ex brush strokes. They are Everywoman. The figures stand static yet expectant, defiant even, atop wooden pedestals.

The hollow vessels are impermanent and fragile, pointing to the continued subjugation of women under pervasive societal gender norms in our own time. Yet, Bessone's language points beyond gender relations, or even how they've changed over the last half century—it speaks to the banality, enchantment, and deep-seated passions that accompany the quotidian melodramas between us and the ones we love. Dramatically oversized ceramic pipes lay throughout the gallery—their open cavities mirror the hollow busts, while providing a counterpoint of loaded symbolism. Perhaps this is the final victory lap for these vindicated women: this loaded memento of misogyny laying lifeless on the floor, while the female forms stand exalted above. *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*.

Amy Bessone: In the Century of Women runs from January 9–March 5, 2016 at GAVLAK Gallery (1034 N Highland Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90038).

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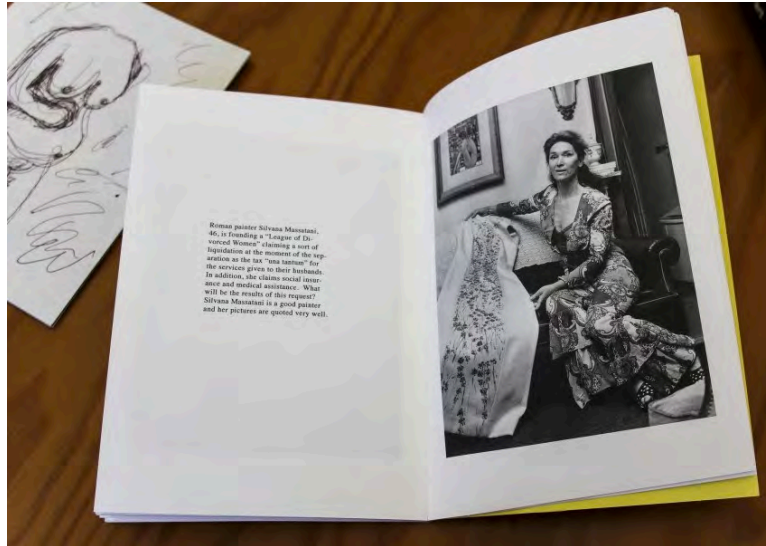


Amy Bessone, *In the Century of Women* (installation view) (2015).
Image courtesy of the artist and GAVLAK Los Angeles. Photo: Jeff
McLane.



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Amy Bessone, *The League of Divorced Women*, artist book, Edition of 250. Published by GAVLAK and Salon 94. Image courtesy of the artist and GAVLAK.



Amy Bessone, *Number 8: Joan* (2015). Archival pigment print, 41.5 x 33.5, Edition of 2, 1 AP. Courtesy of the artist and GAVLAK Los Angeles. Photo: Jeff McLane.