



SALON 94

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Luis Flores Wrestles With Gender By Crotcheting Himself in WWE Mode



(Courtesy of Salon 94)

Wrestling and crochet clash battle-of-the-sexes-style in Salon 94's newest exhibit, Luis Flores' "Another Thing You Did to Me."

The exhibit, which opened Tuesday at the Bowery gallery, tackles issues linked to machismo and femininity through life-sized, hand-crocheted sculptures of wrestlers.

Flores, a Los Angeles-based artist, constructs crocheted doppelgangers of himself, posed in wrestling postures reminiscent of the WWE: prepared to lunge off a ladder or take a competitor down by chokehold.

According to Salon 94, "Growing up in a relatively 'machismo' Latin American household in Northeast LA, Flores was acutely aware that the men in his family learned to dismiss empathy and sensitivity." To balance this hyper-masculine fear of emotion, Flores "immersed himself in the emotional strength of women, in particular his mother."

Flores taught himself how to crochet because his mother had always appreciated it. While studying at UCLA, he saw the Museum of Contemporary Art exhibit "WACK!: Art and the Feminist Revolution," which encouraged him to consider crochet as a legitimate art form, and not simply a feminine craft.



The name of Flores' exhibit is a play on the influence of masculine culture. According to Salon 94, Flores' father recently asked him to list everything he had done that had negatively influenced him during his childhood. The resounding answer of Flores' exhibit is the modeling of toxic masculinity.

By taking on these issues of masculine identity through the traditionally feminine form of crochet, Flores seems to ask how he can be a part of unlearning toxic gender roles. The process of constructing the crocheted wrestlers suggests a part of that process might be trust.

Before crocheting the skin of his wrestlers, Flores himself poses in each of the positions he intends to sculpt. Then, his wife wraps him, full body, to construct the cast of the sculpture. Once the cast is prepared and he is removed from inside, Flores covers the cast in crochet. By ceding control to his wife, and reversing traditional roles of artist and model, Flores comments on the steps he has taken to unlearn gendered expectations.

Flores has participated in solo and group exhibitions in Los Angeles, New York, and Paris, and has work in the collections of the Hammer Museum and University of Chicago Booth School of Business. In 2017, Flores exhibited in Salon 94's "Midtown" exhibit and, most recently, his solo exhibition "Does Your Dick Touch Your Asshole?" traveled to the French Galerie Hussenot.

"Another Thing You Did to Me" runs through April 20 at Salon 94, 243 Bowery.