

Allegra Pacheco | *Boobs in Japan*

July 20 (sat) - August 10 (sat), 2013

GALLERY MoMo Projects is pleased to present a solo exhibition of Allegra Pacheco titled *Boobs in Japan* from July 20 to August 10, 2013.

The original project, *Boobs* showed in Costa Rica last year. Allegra filled the gallery space with her soft sculptures in the shape of boobs. In order to make these she collaborated with Nicaraguan immigrant women living in La Carpio in Costa Rica and working at the Humanitarian Foundation. In addition, she made a mural on the gallery walls. By collaborating with these women, Allegra succeeded in approaching often repressed social constructs in the humorous way. A percentage of the sales of the boobs in Costa Rica were donated for the women who helped produce the work.

As stuffing for the inside of the boobs sculptures, Allegra used sanitary napkins and diapers that companies laid on the shelf. The sanitary napkins symbolize the physiological phenomenon only women have, and the diapers symbolize children only women can give birth to. Holding these symbols inside of the boobs, they indirectly imply the themes of sex and life. By using the discarded stuffing she also brought in the idea of recycling and re-using as important values added to this project.

The problems women face in Japan are not the same ones as those highlighted in the *Boobs* project in Costa Rica, however, there are so many issues that unite women throughout. In *Boobs in Japan*, Allegra Pacheco will display a video where she interviews Japanese women who collaborated in making the boobs for this project, as well as displaying their work in collaboration.

Allegra Pacheco was born in Costa Rica in 1986 and now lives in London. She received her BA from School of Visual Arts and has studied at Wimbledon College of Art in London for her MA. Installation is not only her medium, Pacheco also uses photography and illustration, among others as part of her work. Her works have been displayed at SCOPE Art Fair in Miami, New York Photo Festival in New York and other many places. This is her second visiting to Tokyo.

Through the opportunity offered by the Backers Foundation and AIT, Allegra Pacheco has just participated in the artist-in-resident program in Tokyo and now exhibits her comprehensive creative work with in an exhibition with Alberto Rodríguez Collía at Yamamoto Gendai begging July 15th.

Artist Statement

I started this project as a playful personal project, an exploration on symbols, their meanings and how they inform and influence the world around us. I've also always held very strong feminist beliefs, but more often than not, felt I was apologizing for using the "f word." I felt the BOOBS project worked both as a platform where conversation, collaboration and exchange of personal stories could be shared in a neutral, un-biased context, and one where feminist ideal could be shared in an impartial non-partisan way. Boobs can unite us in many ways- the can be fun, cute and sexual, and at the same time nurturing and motherly- ultimately even transgressing gender as they are one of the primal elements that make us mammals.

Working on this project has allowed me to voice and explore my beliefs in these matters, but it has also lent me the opportunity of working with a wide variety of people from different social and cultural backgrounds. In the previous *Boobs* project I focused on a group of socially disadvantaged Nicaraguan immigrants living in La Carpio, a dangerous ghetto in Costa Rica. It was very gratifying to be able to spread these women's stories and to provide relief for them in the form of compensated work while including them in the art world, and sharing their views on both female and personal issues.

In bringing the *Boobs* project to Japan I wanted to focus on another aspect of femininity, honing in on an older generation of women. I felt Japan's respect for the elderly, for tradition, for culture and crafts were all big influences for shifting the *Boobs* project towards more Japanese concerns.

Another personal concern I believe afflicts our times is the dominating hierarchy of the youth culture, which I find especially permeates western culture (and starts to affect Asia). I find this phenomenon can be seen through many examples, but can be seen even more keenly within contemporary pop culture and in the fashion and art world, all of which somewhat cast aside the concerns and interests of older generations. For all these reasons and several more, I looked for participation in this project from women in the Japanese "Baby Boomer" generation as they would not only provide a window into their world; they were also a fascinating and powerful generation, as they were a tremendous force in the form of social change- they were the first women to wear miniskirts, to marry for love, to go to school and to join the work force.

It was very enriching to work alongside women that had experienced and helped create so much change within their own society, and who were still eager to learn, participate and step outside their comfort zone, all guided by curiosity and creativity. I am very grateful they allowed me to hear their stories, to share their personal opinions on feminine issues, on being a woman in Japan then vs now... all within the context of *Boobs*.

This project is dedicated to their legacy and to all the women who work as catalysts for change around the world. I especially dedicate this project to dear friend and sister Julia Borbon.

Artist's Website: <http://www.allegrapacheco.com>

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