



Linda Berry Stein
College of Fine Arts
JACKSONVILLE UNIVERSITY

LESLIE ROBISON and JASON SCHWAB:

WHAT A MAN, WHAT A MAN

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For more information or accommodations
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Jim Benedict, Gallery Director at jbenedict@ju.edu

Leslie Robison and Jason Schwab: *What a Man, What a Man*

What a Man, What a Man interrogates the structures of patriarchy, idealized archetypes of masculinity, and their current manifestation within our culture. Through their photography and sculptural, mixed-media work, Leslie Robison and Jason Schwab combine subtlety and aggression to offer new perspectives on these archaic narratives.

Leslie Robison and Jason Schwab Exhibition Statement:

In the exhibition *What a Man, What a Man*, artists Leslie Robison and Jason Schwab interrogate structures of patriarchy, historically idealized archetypes of masculinity, and how they currently manifest within our culture. Schwab does this by looking at how masculinity is paraded and cultivated amongst men. Robison looks at the symbols that represent this imbalance of power. The works teeter between subtlety in their subversive gestures and overt aggression as they challenge archetypal notions of masculinity and the patriarchy.

Robison's work investigates the language, symbols, and actions that define power in various relationships and within such institutions as art, politics, and academia. Her most recent work combines historically gendered processes such as woodworking and knitting, and comparatively gendered materials such as cement and yarn. By crafting phallic objects from these materials and processes, the artist challenges the gendering of the phallus itself. Many of the handcrafted objects are fashioned after unisex sexual aids, and have the potential to be performed in the mind of the viewer. These and other repurposed symbols can reveal the absurdity of our current moment in history and its ties to an ongoing struggle against the powerful.

Schwab creates photographs and sculptures that serve as both instigations and evidence of a pervasive and problematic history of the masculine narrative. The works present objects, remnants, language, and iconography that highlights the ways in which archaic masculine tropes seep through multiple facets of our society. The portraits aim at the men we often indict for acts carried out from a history of actions guided by a distorted idolization of "manliness", while the documentary images provide both record of these acts as well as hope for their eventual disintegration. The sculptures with their photographic facades gesture at the absurdity these archetypes have come to be within our culture through exaggerative language and scale. Their humor deconstructs and recontextualizes the seriousness of idealized masculine objects to examine their inherently constructed and prescriptive nature.

Biographical Information:

Leslie Robison is the Kenan Distinguished Professor of Liberal Education in Art at Flagler College in St. Augustine, Florida, and holds an MFA from the University of Florida. Her studio practice uses a variety of media from drawing to performance to examine and challenge institutional power structures. Recent solo exhibitions have included *A Soft Insurrection*, at the DSA Project Space in Dayton, Ohio and *The Language of Endowment* at 621 Gallery in Tallahassee, Florida. Robison's work has been included in numerous national and international group exhibitions including recent exhibitions at the Center for Contemporary Political Art in Washington, D.C. and ARC Gallery in Chicago, Illinois. Robison's work is included in multiple collections including Temple University and the Bavarian State Library.

Jason Schwab was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and currently resides in St. Augustine, Florida. Schwab received his BFA in photography from Kutztown University in 2010 and his MFA from Columbus College of Art & Design in 2014. He currently teaches at Flagler College in the Department of Visual and Performing Arts. Schwab's exhibition history includes national juried exhibitions, multiple solo exhibitions, numerous group exhibitions, and fellowships. Most notable are the award of a Visual Arts Fellowship from the Greater Columbus Arts Council and the subsequent exhibition at the Columbus Museum of Art, the Award for Innovations in Imaging from the Society for Photographic Education, Schwab's solo exhibition *Remove/Approve* at ROYGBIV Gallery, and the inclusion in Manifest Gallery's 4th International Photography Annual publication. Schwab has participated in the Vermont Studio Center artist residency and the Wassaic Artist Residency. In 2016, Schwab co-founded Southern Exposure Project Space, which has held ten exhibitions and most notably showed work from artists Carmen Winant and Jason Lazarus.

Additional artist insights:

Jason Schwab:

A Proclamation is a recontextualizing of the fleeting proclamations found on the back on individuals cars in the form of bumper stickers. The use of pickup trucks and the specific iconography and language (all found online and could be purchased) I have chosen are a distillation of multiple ideologies stemming from a masculine and conservative American history. A singular bumper sticker on a vehicle is like the off handed comment an “uncle” makes during the holidays. The more stickers that are added, the more radical and entrenched those ideologies become, and the closer those ideologies are to becoming unwanted action. This work points towards a growing divide and radicalization of particular American ideologies and a glimpse at the subtleties at the edge of a precipice.

Do You Kiss Your Mother with That Mouth takes the objectifying and demeaning stickers found on the backs of cars, often owned by men and juxtaposes them with portraits of mothers who have sons of their own. The sight of one of these stickers on a passing car can seem humorous and potentially insignificant, but when slowed down and placed on an individual that the sticker broadly addresses in its statement, their demeaning nature lunges to the forefront. With one of the portraits being of my mother, these icons and their language are thoughts and words I would never think to address towards her, so the question needs to be asked, why should they be addressed at any woman and why do these stickers exist at all?

Leslie Robison:

The phallic forms play with scale in that they are too tiny to be the modernist sculptures they resemble and, in many cases, too large to act as the sexual toys they are modeled after. As phalluses, they are also idealized representations of Lacan’s idea of power and the law of the father. Since they are specifically modeled after butt plugs, they could be used on any human, removing a specific gender from the wielder of “power.” The objects created through woodworking (*Homing Power and Tug O’War*) are honed by a female artist in a process more often associated with males. The cement and wax cast phalluses (*A Persistent Cough*) are decorated with a range of protruding objects, including the flowers and jewels one finds on retail butt plugs but also objects that resemble a phallus but have absurd or comical connotations when the viewer imagines them actually being used. The wooden double-ended phallus (*Tug O’War*) and the Cheeto-covered cement phalluses (*Wabi Sabi*) also allow the viewer to indulge in this performative comedy.

Lacan insisted that the phallus was the locus of power but that it did not have to take the form of the penis. In our culture, most phalluses do take an erect shape (such as swords, guns, statues of great men, skyscrapers, etc.) but there are exceptions. For white nationalists, the American flag has been co-opted as such a symbol. By knitting a backwards flag (*Uncomforted*) I return to the origins of this symbol (the legend of Betsy Ross) trying to remake/reclaim it using a skill and a color that are gendered as female. This flag has been exhibited in a range of different ways and was also included in a video (*Betsy to Blame*) in which I roll across a football field in it and kneel on it. In this exhibition, the flag is stretched, revealing the tenuous connections between its components- it is flexible but strained, and potentially stretched permanently out of shape. The delicate nature of the democracy the flag represents is also addressed in the other flag displayed (*Imbleached*). This fragile flag was just completed in time for the exhibition and can be seen as a portrait of our government after the January 6th insurrection.



Leslie Robison
Imbleached
Yarn, Cheetos™ dust
20” x 32”
2021



Leslie Robison
Uncomforted (detail)
Yarn
Size variable, approx. 78" x 54"
2017



Leslie Robison
Uncomforted
Yarn
Size variable, approx. 78" x 54"
2017



Jason Schwab
An Aspirational Object for the Modern Casanova
 Archival inkjet print on board
 16" x 25" x 5"
 2019

Jason Schwab
Big Daddy Natty
 Archival inkjet print on board
 32" x 21" x 9"
 2019

Jason Schwab
Bigger Buck
 Archival inkjet prints on board
 47.5" x 23.75" x 14"
 2021



Jason Schwab
A Proclamation
 Archival inkjet print and vinyl stickers
 62" x 20"
 2021



Jason Schwab
Peering Through Stilted Structures (Fake)
 Archival inkjet print
 16"x 22"
 2020

Jason Schwab
Peering Through Stilted Structures (Vultures)
 Archival inkjet print
 16"x 22"
 2019

Jason Schwab
Peering Through Stilted Structures (Cunt Car)
 Archival inkjet print
 16"x 22"
 2019

Jason Schwab
Peering Through Stilted Structures (Strike Back)
 Archival inkjet print
 16"x 22"
 2019

Jason Schwab
Peering Through Stilted Structures (Blood Trail)
 Archival inkjet print
 16"x 22"
 2019



Jason Schwab
Peering Through Stilted Structures (Skid Marks)
 Archival inkjet print
 16"x 22"
 2019

Jason Schwab
Peering Through Stilted Structures (Rib Cage)
 Archival inkjet print
 16"x 22"
 2021

Jason Schwab
Peering Through Stilted Structures (Fuming)
 Archival inkjet print
 16"x 22"
 2020

Jason Schwab
Peering Through Stilted Structures (In Preparation)
 Archival inkjet print
 16"x 22"
 2020

Jason Schwab
Peering Through Stilted Structures (Blue Flower)
 Archival inkjet print
 16"x 22"
 2019



Leslie Robison
A Persistent Cough
Acrylic rug, wax, found objects
60" x 60" x 4"
2019-2020



Leslie Robison
United Splatter/Imperfect Stars
Yarn
Size variable, approx. 84" x 96" x 1"
2021

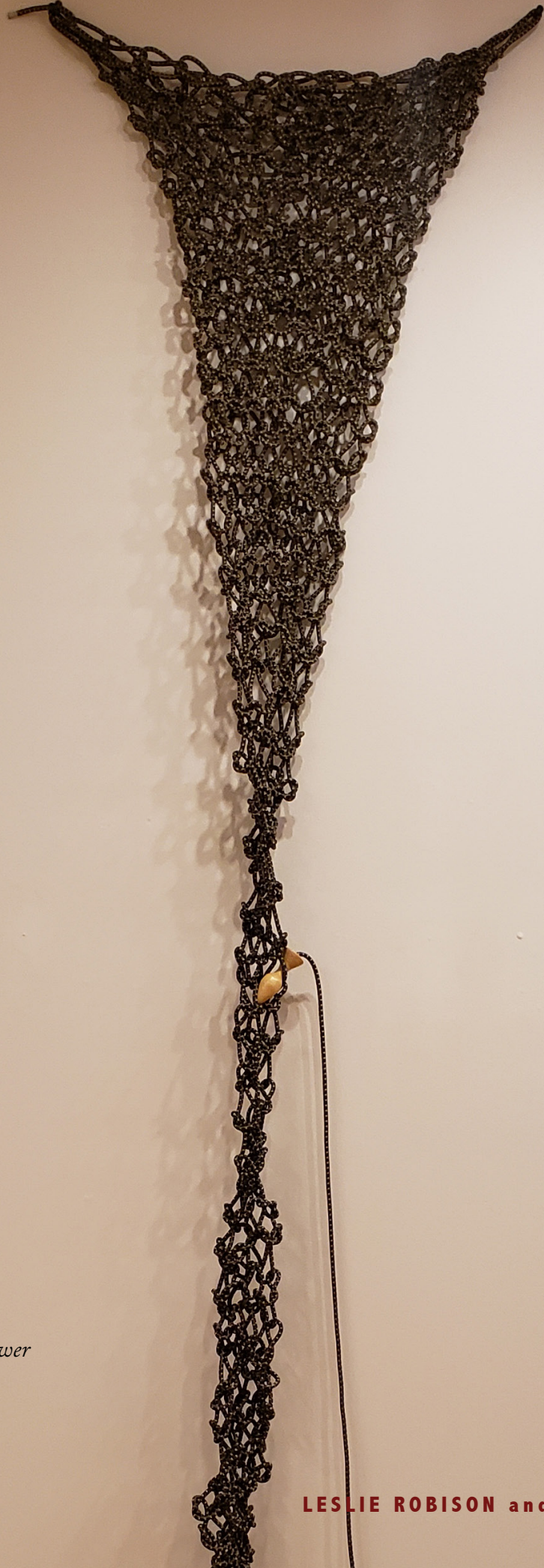
Leslie Robison
Honing Power
Wood
96" x 16" x 20"
2019



Leslie Robison
United Splatter/Imperfect Stars (detail)
Yarn
Size variable, approx. 84" x 96" x 1"
2021



Leslie Robison
Honing Power (detail)
Wood
96" x 16" x 20"
2019

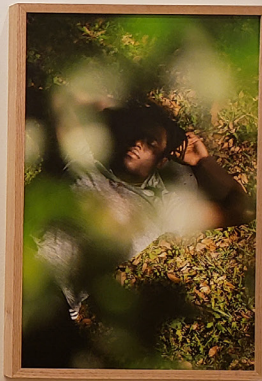


Leslie Robison
A Grower Not a Shower
Bungee cord, wood
140" x 24" x 2"
2021

LESLIE ROBISON and JASON SCHWAB EXHIBITION



Leslie Robison
A Grower Not a Shower (detail)
Bungee cord, wood
140" x 24" x 2"
2021



Jason Schwab
Peering Through Stilted Structures (Dale)
Archival inkjet print
20"x30"
2019

Jason Schwab
Peering Through Stilted Structures (Jason)
Archival inkjet print
20"x30"
2021

Jason Schwab
Peering Through Stilted Structures (Tommy)
Archival inkjet print
20"x30"
2019

Jason Schwab
Peering Through Stilted Structures (Lincoln)
Archival inkjet print
20"x30"
2019

Jason Schwab
Boys Will be Boys, Right?
Archival inkjet print
13" x 19"
2021



Jason Schwab
Boys Will be Boys, Right? (detail)
Archival inkjet print
13" x 19"
2021



Jason Schwab
Boys Will be Boys, Right? (detail)
Archival inkjet print
13" x 19"
2021



Leslie Robison
Bunny-ting 1
 Synthetic fabric
 120" x 10" x 2"
 2020

Jason Schwab
Do You Kiss Your Mother With That Mouth
 Archival inkjet print and vinyl stickers
 31" x 43.5"
 2021

Leslie Robison
Bunny-ting 2
 Synthetic fabric
 125" x 10" x 2.5"
 2020



Leslie Robison
1 + 1 Fetish
 Latex, wire, foam
 17.5" x 1.5" x 27"
 2021

Jason Schwab
Do You Kiss Your Mother With That Mouth
 Archival inkjet print and vinyl stickers
 31" x 43.5"
 2021

Leslie Robison
1 + 1 Western Style
 Synthetic fabric, wire, foam
 18.5" x 2" x 25"
 2021



Jason Schwab
*The Fragile, Developing Self-Image of the Young Person
Needs All the Support and Enhancement it Can Get*
Archival inkjet print on board
14" x 22" x 5"
2021



Jason Schwab
From My Cold Dead Hands
Archival inkjet prints, insulation foam board,
and LED garage light
93" x 98" x 36"
2021

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Percussion Ensemble

Saturday, March 6 at 7:30 PM

New Music at Jacksonville University

Tuesday, March 9 at 7:30 PM

Lunch Music: Jazz Combos

Wednesday, March 10 at Noon

The Kinne Trio-Beethoven

Tuesday, March 16 at 7:30 PM

Women's History Month Concert

Tuesday, March 23 at 6:00 PM

The Jacksonville University Jazz Orchestra in Concert:

The Musings of Miles

Thursday, March 25 at 7:30 PM

The Jacksonville University Jazz Festival

Thursday, March 25 through Saturday, March 27
from 9:00 AM - 9:00 PM

Miles Style... The Jacksonville University Jazz Combos in Concert:

Workin', Steamin', Cookin', Relaxin'

Friday, March 26 at 7:30 PM

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