

JESSICA SILVERMAN GALLERY

For immediate release

Davina Semo: Phantom Ringer

Jessica Silverman Gallery 2

November 9 – December 23, 2017

Opening reception: Thursday, November 9, 6–8pm

Jessica Silverman Gallery is pleased to present “Phantom Ringer,” a solo exhibition by San Francisco-based sculptor Davina Semo.

Semo’s sculptures draw from a dynamic vocabulary of industrial materials, including pigmented concrete, wax cast bronze, powder-coated chains, and stainless steel mesh gloves. Her work examines the beauty of roughness, power, tension, and restraint. The works in “Phantom Ringer” are made through inventive casting processes and often bear the scars, stains and scratches of their production. In dialogue with artists such as Bruce Nauman and Eva Hesse, Semo’s intensely physical works suggest traces and echoes of narratives the viewer is invited to invent.

Suspended from the ceiling are two wax cast bronze bells with black patina, titled *LIKE A TRULY GREAT COMMANDER, SHE SETTLED EVERYTHING AROUND HER* and *SUDDENLY THERE WAS A NOISE OF THINGS BREAKING* (both 2017). Inside each bell is a small clapper cast from a lemon that Semo picked from her own fruit tree. The irregular shape produces idiosyncratic tones; depending on where the lemon strikes, it can produce a melodic chime or a muffled clank. The heaviness of the bells is an analogue of emotional burden, so their sounds suggest a psychological state.

Around the room at eye level are “Phantoms,” a series of cast concrete sculptures, each one embedded with a found chainmail glove. Meditating on matters such as the artist’s hand, ghost bodies, and the gestural, the disembodied hands, measuring about 11 inches high, seem as if they were carefully removed from the exterior of a Brutalist building, alluding to a specific, but incomplete history.

Semo’s titles also offer a glimpse into the real or imagined origins of her sculptures. Constructed in all caps, titles such as, *PLEASE, ONCE, BEHAVE AS SHE WOULD LIKE: DON’T LOOK FOR HER*, reveal fragments of overheard conversations, lines from books, movies and newspapers that can be strung together to reveal parts of a story. Semo often revises these phrases to feature feminine pronouns, which become surprising when they describe feelings that might typically be expected from a man. Juxtaposed with her rugged materials, the feminized titles offer a witty commentary on gender stereotypes.

Davina Semo (b. 1981, Washington, D.C.) completed her MFA at the University of California, San Diego in 2006. She received her BA in Visual Arts from Brown University in 2003. Semo has had solo exhibitions at Marlborough Chelsea (New York), ribordy contemporary (Geneva) and White Flag Projects (St. Louis). She has participated in group shows at San Francisco Arts Commission, the Sculpture Center (New York), Greene Naftali Gallery (New York), Hannah Hoffman (Los Angeles), and the 2011 Bridgehampton Biennial, curated by Bob Nickas. She lives and works in San Francisco.