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Driscoll Babcock Galleries
525 West 25th Street
New York, NY 10001
www.driscollbabcock.com

Tuesday-Friday: 10AM-6PM
Saturday: 12PM-6PM

T. 212 767 1852

HARRIET BART: STRONG SILENT TYPE

October 27 – December 15, 2016
Opening Reception: Thursday, October 27 6-8 pm



Harriet Bart, *SILHOUETTE 2*, 2016. Arches paper sewn onto Fabriano Artistic paper, thread, 24 ½ x 35 inches

DRISCOLL BABCOCK GALLERIES presents *Harriet Bart: Strong Silent Type*, an installation in blackened steel, shaded paper, mirrored chrome, and dark cloth exploring the myriad ways to be seen and to see one's self: a provocative meditation on the deeply human drive to assemble the pieces of our identities. Bart's mirrored and matte surfaced fragments recall pieces of a jigsaw puzzle that never quite fit together, inviting examination of gender archetypes and the way fragments speak to the absence of the whole.

Bart received her formal training in textile arts and architectural tapestry, a purposeful choice to assert the relevance of what has long been considered "feminine labor." In pondering minimalism, an arena dominated by male artists since its inception, Bart translates curvilinear fragments of feminine garment patterns into minimalist objects. In doing so, she allows these fluid shapes to find roots in the body. Like clothing itself, worn to both cover the body and express its being, Bart references the way our inner selves are outwardly expressed but only inwardly experienced.

These undulating shapes in blackened steel are installed as a stoic constellation on the wall, forming the armor of Bart's "strong silent type." The same shapes in chromed steel are installed on the floor, a shattered pond for the contemporary Narcissus. As one leans over the pond, the body and the being fracture. Ten slim mirrors on an adjacent wall allow a respite from ruminating on the shapes of the body – allowing only a sliver view of one's eyes, into the proverbial soul.

A black tapestry titled **PENUMBRA** exists in dialogue with **REMNANTS**, anodized aluminum shelves encasing spools of thread, castaways of the traditionally feminine, painstaking art form of weaving thread into cloth. In **NOTION**, a spool of thread becomes biomorphic in its partially used state, sitting preserved on an industrial gear underneath a protective bell jar.

Bart has juxtaposed our desire to project ourselves with our need to protect ourselves. The blackened steel shapes are a shield from reflection and from the gaze of others. She suggests there is power and significance in both - in visibility - the process of identity construction, and, in the resistance to false dichotomies and expected roles.

In this body of work, Bart delineates the polarity of gendered traits and trades into a commentary on what it means to construct our authentic selves. She offers these altered mirrors of the body, split into pieces and parts, the armor of selfhood in contrast to the reflective nature of identity.

ABOUT HARRIET BART

Harriet Bart lives and works in Minneapolis, MN. Her work is represented in major public and private collections in the United States and Europe, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, MN and the Walker Art Center, MN. Bart has had solo exhibitions at prominent museums such as the Walker Art Center; Laumeier Sculpture Park and Museum, Saint Louis, MO; Weisman Art Museum, Minneapolis, MN; Brunnier Museum, Ames, IA; and the Tweed Museum of Art, Duluth, MN. Her work has shown worldwide in group exhibitions at the Museum of Arts and Design, New York; The Jewish Museum, New York; Center for Contemporary Art, Santa Fe, NM; CAFA Art Museum, Beijing, China; and Klingspor Museum, Offenbach, Germany. A recipient of numerous fellowships and three Minnesota Book Awards, Bart is also a guest lecturer, curator, and founding member of W.A.R.M. Gallery (Women's Art Registry of Minnesota) and the Traffic Zone Center for Visual Arts in Minneapolis, MN.

ABOUT DRISCOLL BABCOCK GALLERIES

Driscoll Babcock's program celebrates the dialogue between the past and the present - showing contemporary artists whose work is grounded in the history of art, yet engaged with the most pertinent issues of today, as well as selections from three centuries of historical American art. As New York's oldest art gallery, Driscoll Babcock's 164 year history makes it one of the oldest cultural institutions in New York City. The gallery has shown some of the most influential artists of the 19th and 20th centuries - during their lifetimes - including George Inness, Winslow Homer, and Marsden Hartley. During the 20th and 21st centuries, the gallery has continued to present masterpieces by Milton Avery, Robert Duncanson, Arthur Dove, Stuart Davis, and Franz Kline, to name a few, and place these works in prominent institutions such as the National Gallery of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cleveland Museum of Art, Smithsonian American Art Museum, as well as important private collections throughout the world. Driscoll Babcock emphasizes that classic art can have contemporary significance, and that contemporary art can have classic pertinence.