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At Alleged's new quarters in the meatpacking district, **SIMONE SHUBUCK's** show of drawings and mixed-media sculptures (*October 21—November 28*) makes use of the concepts that informed the Women's Work movement in conceptual art of the '60s. Shubuck's promising debut exhibition adds

her own deeply personalized, almost hermetized touches to create an aesthetic that is at once graceful and mannered, intense, and slightly grubby.

The small space of the Project Room has been maximized; the large left-hand wall is covered with works in a dense, somewhat disordered arrangement. The first category to emerge with impact from this chaos is the group of several works in the form of women's attire. The forms are recognizable, but these are clothes made of unusual materials;



Simone Shubuck, Installation view (photo courtesy of Alleged Fine Arts).

there is a slip-style minidress made of rounded rectangles of tree bark, and another made of thin tomato slices sewn together with orange thread. On either side, on their own hangers, also sewn with orange thread, are a matching tomato bra and tomato panties.

The matching of the thread to the "fabric" of the dress can be taken as a reference to the futility and labor-intensive quality of traditional "women's work," yet it is also typical of the obsessive attention to detail that gives these works their intensity. By means of a simple trope—the substitution of a perishable material for more durable fabric—the tomato pieces also call to mind the ephemeral nature of fashion and beauty.

More strange juxtapositions follow. A pair of cream-colored cashmere socks has been carefully adorned with rows of small, pink, shiny shrimp that look freeze-dried, as if they had been garnered from inside packets of shrimp-flavored instant noodle soup—surely a labor-intensive project, if ever there was one. A common pushcart of the type familiar to New Yorkers is rendered nearly unrecognizable by being covered in lush green plastic leaves and tree bark. Its handle is of curved plastic bamboo, recalling a grandmother's classy handbag. A button, which a sign directs one to push, triggers a

loud, brief siren. This work has none of the evocative fragility of the tomato dress, and in its brash exuberance and bright adornment it stands out from the delicate drawings as well; but the same care and attention has been given to its assemblage.

The lunatic intensity that is part of the charm of the sculptures surfaces again in the drawings. These are on large sheets of mint-green paper, framed, with magnifying glasses provided to assist the viewer in examining the details. In spite of their formal presentation (framed behind glass), they have the character of pages from a sketchbook, with no attention to composition, and words and phrases jotted in the margins. Indeed, some of the drawings at first seem to be preparatory sketches for the sculptures; there is a figure in a dress made of tomato-slice-sized circles; the pushcart is also seen, with the phrase "wup wup" next to it, referring to the pushcart's siren. However, the pushcart's qualities are such a random assortment that it seems unlikely the artist could have, or would have, conceptualized it so precisely before its creation, and so the sketches become a further manifestation of the artist's obsession with this strange array of objects.

Shubuck's sense of color, though subtle, is as developed as that of any painter; each work has its palette, and the show as whole has an integrated color scheme. The cream and pink shrimp socks, the light beige tree bark, the faded tomato red, and the pale mint green paper of the drawings are the strongest elements, and they allow the exhibition to partly overcome the disadvantage of a slightly crowded, narrow space.

L. Kristin Herndon, New York

Herndon, L. Kristin, "Simone Shubuck", Art Papers Magazine, March/April 2000