

BETTINA HUBBY

Positively Earnest

February 16 - March 23, 2019
Opening Reception: Saturday, February 16th, 6-8pm

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Bettina Hubby
mini Logophile A
2019
Acrylic on canvas
22 by 22 inches

Klowden Mann is very proud to present *Positively Earnest*, Los-Angeles based artist Bettina Hubby's third solo exhibition with the gallery, featuring new paintings, photographic, fabric and wearable works. The show will be on view from February 16th to March 23rd, with an opening reception on Saturday February 16th from 6-8pm.

Positively Earnest centers around Hubby's longstanding interest in the forms through which language defines daily experience. In past work, Hubby has performed all manner of projects and mediums to talk about the rituals and tools used to structure identity; original collages taken from fashion, art and news sources transformed and blown up across gallery walls; a two-year-long collaborative project called "Get Hubbied" in which she interviewed, hired a couple, and curated their wedding; a pop-up "Rock and Eagle" shop in Eagle Rock that was an art project, a social experiment, and a lovingly curated representation of the world of online makers that engaged and amused a community; a series of "Sexual Bronzes" in which grocery store aisle objects were bronzed and patina'd in pairs eliciting the freedoms of coupling outside predetermined social lines. Hubby's work comfortably plays with--and off of--the tropes of an art world that often seems to fear emotional expression and joy, and does so with humor that both embraces and laughs with those tropes, while working to expand their purview. Hubby persists to take "her humor seriously."

With this series, Hubby works directly with language as the written word. The show opens with neon words spelling out "Positively Earnest", a literal announcement of intention to trigger the viewer's Dopamine. Further on, painted works in acrylic on canvas portray rows upon rows of alphabetized adjectives in capital letters painted in reverberating fluorescent: persimmon orange, neon yellow, and electric purple. In "Logophile A", a selection reads: "LIVELY LOVING LOYAL LUCID LUCKY LUCRATIVE LUMINOUS LUSCIOUS LUSH LUSTROUS LUSTY MAGIC MAGNETIC MAGNIFICENT MAJESTIC MARVELOUS MASTERFUL MATURE MEANINGFUL." The words function as positive self-talk: the artist's wish for how she exists in the world, and for how she views herself and is viewed by others. The act of painting these words is a physical manifestation of experience-dependent neuroplasticity--changing neural pathways through positive environment and reinforcement--as well as a way of taking on ideas of artistic legacy.

The painted works are interspersed with photographic self-portraits, depicting the artist from behind with arms raised in front of a variety of idyllic landscapes. Hubby's outstretched pose in these pieces, which scientifically has been shown to lower cortisol and raise confidence,

recalls archetypes associated with wonder, joy, reception, and celebration. Her signature humor comes into play alongside those archetypal ideals, as each piece shows a different word written across her bottom: ebullient, empathetic, celestial, earnest, valiant, serene, majestic. The words are raised from the surface of the photograph, making them even more assertive and funny as they take on the notion of personal branding.

As Hubby says, “I’ve always loved the idea of subliminal advertising, but love even more the idea of not-so-subliminal advertising. It’s an ‘in your face’ way to promote the power of the word. And we need to watch our words - they are neon markers for what our life will be like. It takes a lot of discipline to undo the damaging beliefs we inherited and are bombarded with from the world, but the brain can make new pathways. It takes repetition and effort to create those new ruts, forcing the synapses to fire over and over again in a new way, so I am bombarding you in a way with a new set of ABCs to hardwire.”

To that end, Hubby’s fabric and wearable works, titled “TH-INK” are created with the same stream of personally significant power words as her paintings. The fabric takes form in a t-shirt, a trench coat, and the top of a weighted blanket. In each case, she imagines that the words worn near the skin might imbue the wearer with a big dose of earnest positivity, a reminder to them and others of the power of language, and possibly even superhero style protection. During a time of divisive and negative public discourse, Hubby intends *Positively Earnest* to offer a mode of joy and empowerment for connecting to ourselves and others.

Bettina Hubby (b. 1968, New York, NY) earned her MFA from the School of Visual Arts in New York in 1995, moving to Los Angeles in 1999. Her work has been featured widely in Los Angeles at venues including Klowden Mann, the Santa Monica Museum of Art, LAND (Los Angeles Nomadic Division), ForYourArt, Side Street Projects, The Center for the Arts, Eagle Rock, and many others. Solo shows also include a current presentation of “The Sexual Bronze Show” at The Erotic Heritage Museum in Las Vegas through June of 2019, and a solo show in 2017 at Lora Reynolds Gallery in Austin, TX. Hubby was featured in Wallpaper Magazine as a top creative talent in LA, in ArtForum’s best of 2014, on NPR, and her work has also been written about in LA Weekly, New York Magazine, the Los Angeles Times, the Huffington Post, and many others.