Art Viewer

Amanda Ross-Ho at Mary Mary
December 11, 2018

Artist: Amanda Ross-Ho
Exhibition title: HURTS WORST
Venue: Mary Mary, Glasgow, UK
Date: November 10, 2018 – January 19, 2019
Photography: Max Slaven / All photographs courtesy the artist and Mary Mary, Glasgow
Mary Mary is pleased to present HURTS WORST, Amanda Ross-Ho’s first solo exhibition at the gallery. The show will feature a suite of new large scale textile assemblages, and a group of small text-based paintings.

In 1981, two American paediatric nurses working in a burn unit identified the need for a visual tool to help pre-verbal children accurately describe the complex sensation of pain. The result was the Pain Rating Scale, consisting of a series of expressive cartoon facial ideograms with an accompanying numerical system and text in multiple languages. Forebears of the omnipresent *emoji* invented in 1999, the success of the first pain scale begat countless nonproprietary variations, slipping into widespread usage at medical facilities. Claiming stylistic liberty, each version aimed to create a universal metric to measure human suffering, factoring in diverse perspectives of generation, culture, and ability.

HURTS WORST mines this database, isolating the faces that represent the extreme end of twelve different pain scales. Like Tragedies permanently divorced from their better half, these flat graphic depictions are translated into large scale, wall bound textile assemblages, gathered together into an ensemble of misery and all its company. Hand hewn with collage-like techniques of frenetic needlecraft, each soft wall hanging teeters between the index of its crisp graphic origin and its anxiously tactile decoy. Vulnerable, frayed, and cranked to 11, they intone a choral sob tuned to acutely describe the anguish of a universal and perpetually raw nerve.

Los Angeles based Amanda Ross-Ho has spent more than a decade performing conceptual and material forensics that wrestle with the entwined ecologies of personal and universal phenomena. Borrowing from muscle memory of formative experiences in stagecraft, prop making, photography and performance, she cultivates an ongoing vocabulary of theatrical gestures and recursive experimentation. Ross-Ho surgically parses the currencies of matter, human experience, and cultural strata, shifting the status of known quantities and rearranging the DNA of our circadian experiences. On her watch, ephemeral artifacts convert into monuments and permanence becomes fugitive and uncertain. Like autopsies or historical reenactments, her work disarticulates anatomies of established structures, reanimating them to hyperbolic effect.


Amanda Ross-Ho, *HURTS WORST*, 2018, exhibition view, Mary Mary, Glasgow
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Amanda Ross-Ho, *Untitled Crisis Actor (Restless unsettled Cries inconsolably)*, 2018, Canvas, fleece, burlap, polyester Pro-Brite mesh, patent leather, felt, batting, thread, safety pins, 148 x 142 cms / 58 1/4 x 55 7/8 ins
Amanda Ross-Ho, *Untitled Crisis Actor (Unimaginable, Unspeakable)* 2018 (detail), Canvas, polyester charmeuse, stretch lace, snakeskin print cotton, white linen, heavy duty canvas, batting, thread, safety pins, 147 x 144 cms / 57 13/16 x 56 11/16 ins

Amanda Ross-Ho, *Untitled Crisis Actor (WORST PAIN IMAGINABLE)* 2018, Canvas, stretch knit, jersey mesh, textured polyester charmeuse, batting, thread, safety pins, 142 x 140 cms / 55 7/8 x 55 1/16 ins
Amanda Ross-Ho, *Untitled Crisis Actor (WORST PAIN POSSIBLE)* 2018 (detail), Canvas, Discount Satin Polyester Tahari, Special Sale Fleece, metallic lycra, patent leather, vinyl, nylon net, batting, thread, 144 x 134 cms / 56 11/16 x 52 3/4 ins
Amanda Ross-Ho, * Untitled Crisis Actor (Worst Possible Pain) 2018 (detail), Canvas, polyester charmeuse, rip stop nylon, textured polyester charmeuse, satin, white linen, batting, thread, safety pin, 152 x 134 cms / 59 13/16 x 52 3/4 ins

Amanda Ross-Ho, * Untitled Crisis Actor (As bad as it could be. nothing else matters) 2018, Canvas, Discount Satin Polyester Tahari, batting, thread, safety pins, 151 x 107 cms / 59 7/16 x 42 1/8 ins
Amanda Ross-Ho, *Untitled Crisis Actor (HURTS WORST)* 2018, Canvas, bull denim, batting, thread, 150 x 144 cms / 59 x 56 11/16 ins

Amanda Ross-Ho, *Untitled Crisis Actor (HURTS WORST Worst Pain Imaginable)* 2018 (detail), Canvas, heavy duty canvas, dye sublimation on canvas, polka dot cotton, muslin, batting, thread, safety pins, 148 x 141 cms / 58 1/4 x 55 1/2 ins
Amanda Ross-Ho, *Untitled Crisis Actor (Excruciating unbearable tortuous crushing tearing)* 2018, Canvas, lycra polyester Marni II, batting, thread, safety pins, 143 x 137 cms / 56 1/4 x 53 7/8 ins

Amanda Ross-Ho, *Untitled Crisis Actor (This pain is UNBEARABLE overwhelming We will not want to move. We will be in tears this is our breaking point)* 2018 (detail), Canvas, satin, basket weave cotton, textured vinyl, specialty knit fleece, batting, thread, 148 x 144 cms / 58 1/4 x 56 11/16 ins
Amanda Ross-Ho, *Untitled Crisis Actor (WORST POSSIBLE PAIN)* 2018 (detail), Canvas, swiss dot, specialty fleece knit, batting, thread, 150 x 111 cms / 59 x 43 11/16 ins
Amanda Ross-Ho, *Untitled Metrics (TENS)* 2018 (detail), Heavy duty canvas, lace, vinyl, perforated vinyl, satin, felt, thread, Dimensions variable, 24 parts