

Rupture

written by Yang-En Hume, 2016

Rupture is an installation that responds to traditional embroidery conventions. These distasteful objects react against ideals including order, precision, taste, elegance, domesticity, restraint, delicateness and beauty. *Rupture* embodies everything the art of needlework is not meant to be – a violent, abject eruption of lace, thread, hair and fluids.

These pieces are the antithesis of the unseen, domestic craft and labour which women have participated in for centuries. Their presence explodes into the gallery, demanding space and attention whilst disrupting quiet contemplation. The work is a metaphor for the female body, which, similar to needlework, is expected to be neat, constrained and beautiful. The violence of these anti-embroideries mirrors the physical strain involved in the embroidery process, as well as the brutality often experienced while occupying a female body.

Pricked

written by Yang-En Hume and Gillian Lavery 2016

Pricked is a collection of contemporary textiles by artists Kate Andrews, Yang-En Hume, Gillian Lavery and Hannah Toohey inspired by images of an embroidery and lace archive. During a residency in Paris in 2015, Hume documented an archive of European embroidery and lace from the *Library of Decorative Arts*. These images served as the starting point for this exhibition, yet the resulting works are diverse. Various aspects of the archive peaked the artists' interest: Andrew's work acknowledged the poor conditions the early lacemakers labored under, Hume reacted to embroidery conventions often associated with 'femininity', Lavery attended to a small piece of lace through the act of drawing, and Toohey responded to the material tools of embroidery. A multifarious conversation contemplating embroidery, materiality, labour and visibility developed from the initial collection of images.

The artworks in this exhibition reference struggle and attention. They pay homage to the centuries of anonymous women who have engaged in the 'domestic crafts' by exploiting and expanding upon traditional textile conventions. The process of embroidery over the finished product is of particular interest to the artists, and as an extension of this, a concern for the stories, lives and bodies of the women who created the original lace pieces in the archive.

Embroidery materials, conventions and techniques have been employed, albeit re-interpreted, while other needlecraft conventions have been discarded altogether. These re-imagined embroideries refuse to be relegated to the domestic sphere. Instead, they adopt qualities often associated with drawing, painting and sculpture. *Pricked* juxtaposes the beautiful with the macabre, the meditative with the playful, the precise with the abject and the domestic with the public.