

# Trish Tillman

## Shore Leave

November 7 - December 20, 2019



**Asya Geisberg Gallery** is thrilled to present "Shore Leave", the third solo exhibition of **Trish Tillman**. Comprised of large modular wall works in the artist's trademark high-color upholstered shapes with minimal accents, the show also features two floor works which combine upholstered protrusions with bedroom furniture. "Shore Leave" propels Tillman's references ever closer to the body, as what before may have been hinted at now is paraded with pride. The show insinuates a confrontational approach to the viewer, while still wrapped in an elegant façade of impeccable finishes and embellishments such as studs or chains. Each piece combines abstracted forms with understandable physical allusions - for instance, a zipper evokes a movement, a sexual place, a hint of action - to create an overall enigma. The tightly bound vinyl both confronts with surface clarity and keeps overt messages hidden with physical tension, or deflects through minimal elements such as studs, ribbons, or metal tabs.

An expression that conjures the naughty doings of sailors on a brief reprieve from duty, "Shore Leave" for Tillman implies a multi-layered concept of debauchery - and one that insists on the unwritten code of "what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas". The desire to become a libertine once traveling confirms that we need the strictures of home, roles, or relationships that otherwise point us towards propriety. The artist's grandfather collected exotic souvenirs from his visits while in the Navy, and his life-long pattern of bad behavior drew a confusing image of a charming beloved figure who allowed his indiscretions to darken real life. This idea of a boundary being crossed, or even being necessary, permeates the emotional tenor of the work, and connects it to our current "Me-Too" climate of hyper-nuanced investigation into our past.

Tillman's love of surface - both real and metaphorical - now presents an opportunity to rewrite her painful childhood memories. The stillness of the work, its preteen store-bought embellishments along with a frisson of fetish, neat sewing lines, and references to furniture, handbags, or diners and bars, all create a manufactured feel, channeling trauma into a slick product. When encountered in person, they seem like fierce warrior shields, or totemic emblems - the opposite of a fragile inside. They pave the way forward for the intimate themes of family secrets, years of hiding and sudden moments of revelation, much like the balance of each work in Tillman's show: quick touches added to belabored areas. In one work, "First Mate", the artist has printed her own symbolic language onto the vinyl - somewhere between hieroglyphs, a constellation map, or a hobo code. These are at first hardly noticeable - the larger moves of color, shape, and symmetry having come first. But upon closer looking, we are rewarded with imagining what this language is trying to explain. Tillman never fully translates this code, but instead embeds her own mark-making onto the surface - distanced, digitized, yet nonetheless deeply personal. The artist's powerful restraint shows the immense travel between a person's lived experience and the point where it becomes a much broader statement.

*Trish Tillman was born in Chicago and lives and works in New York. She received an MFA from School of Visual Arts and a BFA from James Madison University. Tillman has had exhibitions at the Visual Arts Center of Richmond, VA; Hilde L.A., Los Angeles, CA; Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Philadelphia, PA; CYDONIA, Fort Worth, TX; Real Tinsel, Milwaukee, WI; Fireplace Project, East Hampton, NY; Present Company, New York, NY; Cindy Rucker Gallery, New York, NY; Regina Rex, New York, NY; Emerson Dorsch, Miami, FL; Civilian Art Projects, Washington, DC; and Elephant Art Space, Los Angeles, CA; among others. Press includes Artforum, The Washington Post, Cultured Magazine, Sculpture Magazine, The Observer, Art F City, Art Spiel, and R Home Magazine. Residencies include the Visual Arts Center of Richmond, VA; Kala Chaupal Festival at Digg Palace, Jaipur, India; and the Fountainhead Residency, Miami, FL.*



*Moored--Shift Colors, 2019*  
Vinyl, vegan leather, chain, hardware, plaster, acrylic, wood, foam  
64h x 52w x 2d in



*Learning the Ropes, 2019*  
Wood, wood stain, fabric, foam, zipper, webbing, drawer handle, hardware  
30h x 30w x 17d in