

GAVLAK

Lisa Anne Auerbach

Libraries

February 9 – March 16, 2019

Opening Reception: Saturday, February 9, 4:00-6:00pm

Gavlak Los Angeles is pleased to present, *Libraries*, a solo exhibition of new knitted bookshelf works by Los Angeles-based artist Lisa Anne Auerbach. This is the artist's fifth solo exhibition with Gavlak, and her second solo exhibition at Gavlak Los Angeles.

Working in many different mediums over the course of her now 25-year career – including self-publishing, photography, gouache on paper, knitted sweaters, and knitted textile works on linen – the focus of publishing has always remained the central theme of Auerbach's work. For *Libraries*, this focus can be understood not only through the actual subject matter of books, but also by how Auerbach "prints" each work in her studio using large, nearly archaic, knitting machines. As part of the process, Auerbach strips each book of its original graphic design, size, and color, and remakes them into flat, almost pixelated, knitted rectangles with handwritten or occasionally typeset titles.

In 2012, Auerbach self-published, *Bookshelf*, which provided an intimate inventory list of all books in the artist's possession. Prompted by a move, Auerbach began the project as a means to prune her hefty collection of publications. In reality, the task led to Auerbach's realization that her books – some in her life since early childhood – culminated to create an anthology of her experiences, interests, and obsessions. Not only was Auerbach finding common threads in her collection – recurring themes such as: history of photography, environmentalism, pornography, cookbooks, critical theory, and cats – but photographs, airplane tickets, and other miscellaneous items stuffed inside the books proved just as biographical. *Bookshelf* was later followed by *Bookshelf 2*, which was commissioned for the 2014 Whitney Biennial. These publications were the catalyst for Auerbach's first knitted bookshelf works.

The idea of books as a portrait of an individual is the basis of the body of work on view. Auerbach believes you cannot judge a book by its cover, but that you can start to understand a person through their library. The works included in the exhibition are based on the libraries of real people. The titles are suggestive, poetic, unmoored from content, and floating as signifiers. Heavily edited and re-ordered, each bookshelf acts as a portrait of Auerbach's creation. In most cases, who or what the bookshelf is based on is not important to the understanding of the work. In other cases, such as with the piece, *Fear*, 2018 (based on Donald Trump), and, *Oil for Soil*, 2018 (based on Osama Bin Laden), the biographical aspect of the work is divulged.

As with all of Auerbach's oeuvre, the works in *Libraries* act as a means of disseminating information both private and public to a larger audience. The books these works were based on are kept in quasi-public locations. Three of the libraries are in academic offices, a fourth is in an art gallery, and a fifth is in a yoga studio. The books inform those who visit these places about commitment, intellectual investment, and depth of inquiry. They also show personality, quirkiness, and academic history. There are a few books that overlap between libraries, books that were perhaps part of many college course loads.

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Some books you may ponder to be gifts, as they don't quite fit in; others might have been hidden away on a top shelf, out of the way and out of sight. Auerbach is interested in the understanding of books as an expansive field and she believes the deep engagement with knowledge books provide, rather than something that can be read in 140 or 280 characters, cannot be understated. Furthermore, in an age of digitization, hardcopy publications are becoming rarer and Auerbach's images of bookshelves become a stand-in for the real thing quickly becoming extinct.

Auerbach's work has been featured in recent exhibitions at The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, CA (2018); Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn NY (2018); Craft and Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2017); Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, Baden-Baden, Germany (2017); Mona Bismarck American Culture Center, Paris, France (2016); Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, Paris, France (2016); Parasophia Kyoto International Festival of Culture, Kyoto, Japan (2015); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY (2014); The Saatchi Gallery, London, UK (2014); Malmö Konsthall, Malmö, SE (2012); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA (2012); Nottingham Contemporary, Nottingham, UK (2009); University of Michigan Art Museum, Ann Arbor, MI (2009); Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, CO (2008).

An artist's reception will be held on Saturday, February 9, from 4-6pm at Gavlak Los Angeles (1034 North Highland Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90038). For more information concerning the exhibition, or for press inquiries, please contact Lauren Wood at Lauren@gavlakgallery.com, or 323-467-5700.