

Allyson Mitchell: Lady Sasquatch

Buried in the in memory banks of our collective popular culture is the mythical creature called Sasquatch. Aboriginal folklore about the Sasquatch, 'Wild Man of the Forest' or Big Foot (as he is referred to in the US) has been appropriated by the white Canadian mainstream - arguably an expression of the racist fears around the "otherness" of native culture - and by default - nature in general. In traditional Western thought, the female body has been associated with similar phenomena: nature, chaos and irrationality and the male with order and rationality. In this case, I want to know - with the thousands of sightings posted on websites, the multiple documentary films about the topic and the guest appearances of Big Foot on televisions shows, how come no one has ever seen a Lady Sasquatch?

Lady Sasquatch is your dream girl only bigger and hairier- and she might eat you if you don't look out. The exhibit, Lady Sasquatch includes large wall pieces that are applique fun fur on found textiles. The content are giantess furry women with fangs barred. Influenced by photographs found in Playboy magazines from the 1970's, I have produced a "reverse airbrush effect" - making the ladies more "real" more "authentic" more "attainable" as beast-creatures than they were as human women. The exhibit also includes giant sculptural sasquatches in a diorama setting that evokes the natural history museum or roadside attraction.

I am interested in parody as a means to question some of the values that we hold as common sense - like women should have no body hair, small thin white bodies are the only ones that are sexy and that those bodies are constructed and reproduced solely for the pleasure of the heterosexual male gaze. Parodying such images (like those found in Playboy centerfolds) can make these worlds collide. Recontextualizing and refiguring the image of the female body can hold it up for the construct that it is. You want nature? I'll give you nature! Lady Sasquatch explores these associations and redresses the lack of representation of "different" bodies in popular culture.

Allyson Mitchell's solo exhibition "Lady Sasquatch" is about myths, female sexuality and fun/fear.