

Wanted Legs

Kelly Geiger

(sculpture-installation art with digitally altered sign)



My thought for this piece was to enhance the feminine qualities that women generally feel self-conscious about. To do this, I added packing material (packing peanuts) to the mannequin legs to represent a more voluptuous and fuller figure quality. On a personal level, my calves and quadriceps seem to always be well muscled and I never consider them to be “problem areas.” I left these areas unpadded on the mannequin and instead, I hot-glued rings to represent muscle fibers and growth.

My legs in general have always confused me. They are not long or thin, and they hardly resemble those of a mannequin. The texture of my own legs varies as well. Being a German, I grow more hair than the average or stereotypical woman and it's virtually impossible to have smooth legs all the time. The packing peanuts represent textures that all women have on their bodies, whether it be hair or cellulite.

I believe that hips are the most naturally feminine quality of a woman. Hips vary on every woman, they come in all shapes and sizes but a majority of women seem to want to hide their hips. Since my goal for this piece was to accentuate these so called "flaws," I had to make the hips seem as prominent and delicate as possible. I cut up garbage bags and stuffed them with tissue to make flower-like structures which fertily bloom around the hips and lower torso.

The piece is presented in its original environment, a window display. I chose the consignment shop window because it ties the piece even deeper into its roots as a model for how women should look. We typically think of a window mannequin as an ideal of how we should be presented. By transforming the unreal shape of the original mannequin into something more real, it identifies with the audience instead of making the audience believe they need to strive for something they'll never be.

I had intended this piece to be viewed on a universal level among women. Even though no two women are alike, I am sure that women will connect to this piece by understanding that their "flaws" are not really flaws, but a series of gendered qualities that add to one's character.