



Geneviève Grenier, *FémeLOT*, 2015, dyed textiles, stockings, glass, wood, cables, oil and milk.

With a background in glass blowing and photography and a preference for working in a variety of mediums, Geneviève Grenier creates abstract installations dealing with the social issues that surround her. Her life experiences have made her conscious of the social constructions that are imposed on people. She is not interested in direct confrontation as a means of raising the viewer's awareness but rather aims to provoke reflection on the issues addressed in her work.

Inspired by *Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God*, a late-sixteenth-century tempera painting by the School of Moscow with Northern influences, Grenier's installation consists of a stretcher suspended at kneeling level, made by dyeing and sewing together her deceased grandmother's handkerchiefs. Three hand-blown glass globes—one containing oil, another filled with milk and a third encased in a nude stocking—are suspended above, while three glass ribs are lying on the

floor underneath the stretcher. The pink colour scheme alludes to flesh and traditional notions of femininity. With an insistence on the organic and corporeal, this installation employs a feminist approach in its abstract interpretation of womanhood as a social construction. Echoing the Virgin Mary's halo in form, the glass globes represent conventional ideals of femininity that are still imposed on women today: the milk signifies the maternal role; the oil symbolizes the domestic sphere; and the stocking refers to normative definitions of beauty. The allusions to flesh and ribs in the installation convey the personal and visceral experience of struggling with gender norms. For Grenier, *Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God* shows the Virgin Mary as having to take her role as a proper mother and woman in a narrative written by men. As a signifier of death, the stretcher represents the artist's declaration of the end of social prescriptions of womanhood. Yet it is not a final demise, as gender norms remain a reality, nor is it a violent rebellion, as "dormition" means a non-violent death for saints, or in this case, for social constructions.

Georges-Étienne Carrière