



Felix Beaudry: CONGENITAL KNOT at Situations

Review by Ernesto Renda

In February, the Lower East Side gallery Situations opened the first solo exhibition of artist Felix Beaudry (b. 1996 Berkeley, CA; lives and works in Brooklyn, NY). The show brings together works on paper, woven tapestries, digital drawings, and a large “muscle-suit”. The suit, titled *Bury me in his tits* (2020), is placed in Situations’ Henry Street window, playing with the trope of a store-front mannequin. At the opening reception, it was activated and modeled by painter Linus Borgo. This voluptuous fluffy body is made with hand-tufted and machine-tufted fabric, and Beaudry cites Sheila Hicks as an artist he was looking at. The work was originally conceived as a monstrous costume piece for a performance, but in making it, Beaudry says “it became more about appreciating the male form while trying to separate the muscley body from all of the things I relate to it like overpowering.” The statuesque volume and anatomical specificity of the muscles place the suit in the same formal space as many other artists who have appreciated and contemplated the male form in three dimensions. Rather than a sculptural synecdoche for divine perfection, however, the work allows Beaudry to get close to, fetishize, or even inhabit a form that is threatening. I think of how Greek sculptors may have related to their works: the first impulse was to give earthly bodies to divine beings so that humans could walk among them, but that must have always been tempered with a real fear of those beings who were believed to be petty and violent. Fear, eroticism, and an artistic curiosity in equal measure. I imagined a classical marble torso, carted off from Rome to be displayed in some Oscar Wilde-esque townhouse. Yet even as they might be compared to the statues of antiquity, Beaudry invests a realism to his figures, and rather than making them “perfectly sculpted”, the artist takes every opportunity to investigate the meaty bulge of a belly or a chest in the muscle-suit, paintings, and the machine-knit tapestries, bearing some stylistic similarities to the paintings of Jonathan Lyndon Chase. In many cases, the erotica scenes in the paintings and tapestries seem like vehicles for these corporeal investigations. As you move through the show, you and Beaudry explore flesh in all its hardnesses and softnesses and the ways to render it. Situations is located at 127 Henry Street, New York, NY.