

Michelle Vaughan  
A Movement of Women

August 26 – October 25, 2020  
Theodore:Art, Brooklyn, NY

Michelle Vaughan's installation includes

- 40 portraits in pastel of American conservative women
- 12 letterpress quotes
- a data index box with 40 entries
- a library of 87 books
- as well as archival materials collected by Vaughan over several years

The opening date for this show is important. August 26, 1920 — the date of the passage of the 19th Amendment — arguably the high point of unity for America's women — came after some 70 years of work from the first women's convention, in Seneca Falls, focused on achieving universal suffrage.

In the 100 years since that date, women have become increasingly divided.

While progressive women were pushing for equality, conservative women spent much of their time defending American liberty and family values.

Vaughan's project investigates 40 of those conservative women, including activists, entertainers, politicians, television hosts, pundits and writers who have platforms to reach wide audiences. The list includes Laura Ingraham, Betsy DeVos, Anita Bryant, Nancy Reagan, and Phyllis Schlafly — all of whom also provide quotations for a series of twelve 8 x 10 inch letterpress prints (hand-pulled with Cheltenham metal type on pink heavy stock office paper).

The focus on conservative women helps Vaughan gain a clearer understanding of “progress” versus “tradition” when it comes to women's rights, health and equality.

For instance, a woman's right to choose has been under attack since the passing of Roe v. Wade, leaving progressive women in a constant state of defense for the last 46 years, instead of building a stronger coalition for women's health as a whole.

Recent headlines have featured conservative women defending the patriarchy in sexual discrimination lawsuits at companies like Fox News; DeVos's Department of Education rolling back sexual assault protection on college campuses; and the unfair pay gap women continue to face in the workforce.

*“As we remember those who paved a path for progress, I was instead interested in exploring stories of conservative women and their journey in shaping American values while reinforcing the patriarchal norm. Some have famous legacies; others are lesser-known women who made imprints in the law, influenced policy, or had prominent positions across faith-based communities. Collecting names of who to include became a complex, personal endeavor.”*

*Michelle Vaughan*



12 letterpress prints, 2020  
hand-pulled letterpress, ink on paper  
8x 10 inches each  
edition of 20

Careers aren't fulfilling  
There are practically  
I had no clue  
There is no war  
I was not the power  
We are buying influence  
I wouldn't call  
We must not render  
If gays are granted  
Well if I were in charge  
It would be a much better  
What I am defending



**Careers aren't fulfilling at all, it turns out,  
if you wind up in bed at night alone.**

2020 marks the centennial of the 19th Amendment, when American women were granted the right to vote. Since then, women have incorporated themselves into the political arena — forming groups like the National Women's Party in Washington D.C. and many others throughout the country. Some of those women focused their priorities on family rights and anti-communism. Educated and often monied, conservative women began to find their voice.

**I had no clue what was going on in Roger Ailes' office, I have never had any issues with any sort of harassment myself.**

**There is no war on women.**

**Well, if I were in charge, they would know that  
waterboarding is how we baptize terrorists.**



40 data cards:  
one for each woman included in the project

The concept of protecting the family originated with outrage against Roosevelt's New Deal in the 1930s. To some, these welfare programs were considered intrusive and threatening to the foundations of family. They went against the kind of individualism Ayn Rand was coining during the birth of Libertarianism. Simultaneously, many of the same women began to fear the "internationalism" of both Jews and Soviets, and signed up for the propaganda and conspiracy theories behind The Red Scare.

RAND, AYN

DOC/Death: 1905 - 1982

Party: No Party Preference / Libertarian

Education: Saint Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russia

Occupation: Author, philosopher

Residence: New York City

Marriage status: Married (Frank O'Conner)

No. of children: 0

Known for: Coined the philosophy "Objectivism" which inspired the Tea Party. Wrote 'Fountainhead' and 'Atlas Shrugged' and is remembered as one of the "Mothers of Libertarianism" who conservatives champion. Identified as a "radical for capitalism". Accepted social security later in her life.

In her own words: "A government is the most dangerous threat to man's rights: it holds a legal monopoly on the use of physical force against legally disarmed victims."

RICE, CONDOLEEZZA

DOB/Death: 1954 -

Party: Republican

Education: University of Denver (BA, PhD), University of Notre Dame (MA)

Occupation: Former U.S. Secretary of State, former U.S. National Security  
Adviser, professor

Residence: Palo Alto, CA

Marriage status: Single

No. of children: 0

Known for: Appointee of the George W. Bush Administration who was involved in "The War on Terror" after the 9/11 attacks and wrongly attributed Saddam Hussein with the incident in making a case for war with Iraq. She permitted the CIA to use waterboarding techniques in 2002.

In her own words: "Under no circumstances should we or have we condoned torture."



*Forty Portraits, 2019-20*

chalk pastel on paper, each framed and with accompanying label

paper size: 15 x 12 inches each

Michele Bachman  
Amy Coney Barrett  
Janice Rogers Brown  
Anita Bryant  
Elaine Chao  
Lynne Cheney  
Susan Collins  
Kellyanne Conway  
Ann Coulter  
Marjorie Dannenfelser

Betsy DeVos  
Elizabeth Dilling  
Elaine Donnelly  
Nellie Gray  
Janet Greene  
Nikki Haley  
Kay Bailey Hutchinson  
Laura Ingraham  
Kay Ivey  
Mildred Fay Jefferson

Clare Boothe Luce  
Rose Wilder Lane  
Susana Martinez  
Rebekah Mercer  
Penny Young Nance  
Kirstjen Nielsen  
Priscilla Owen  
Kathleen Thompson Norris  
Sarah Palin  
Jeanine Pirro

Ayn Rand  
Nancy Reagan  
Condoleezza Rice  
Sarah Huckabee Sanders  
Phyllis Schlafly  
Suzanne Scott  
Suzanne Silvercruys  
Eunie Smith  
Virginia Thomas  
Suzanne Venker





To be a conservative woman was to protect the patriarchy which supported stable middle class American life. Common opinion in such circles was that immigrants posed a direct threat against that stability. Conservatives rejected big government, fought for individualism and family values, and slowed social progress. Conservatives sought to preserve their hard-fought or deserved station in society. A patriarchal hierarchy made sense, complete with a rigid class system (and racism).



The elements in the *learning center*:

in the display cases:  
political memorabilia such as vintage conservative political pins and bench warmers from the 2017 presidential inauguration

on the table:  
authentic press photos with data or press clippings on the back, magazine covers which include the women in the project, vintage newsletters from Republican womens' groups, fundraiser cookbooks compiled by Republican women





three 45rpm vinyl records of songwriter Janet Greene singing her conservative folk music such as “Commie Lies” and “Poor Left Winger”



This project traces 100 years of the conservative woman, examining the voices who made the most impact. Conservative women in power today have climbed political and corporate ranks in the same way liberal women have, through higher education, connections and hard work. During the mid-twentieth century, educated women like Phyllis Schlafly organized nationally to undermine the passing of the Equal Rights Act. Today, a new generation of conservative women such as Kristjen Nielson and Betsy DeVos have furthered the movement by rolling back policies that protect women, students, children and immigrants.





[Caption]



[Caption]



[Caption]



[Caption]



[Caption]



[Caption]



[Caption]



[Caption]



[Caption]



[Caption]



FIRST YOUNG MARCH  
1965/70(?) -

the plate is a vintage 50 year commemorative plate for the “National Federation of Republican Women 1938-1988”



The women included in “ A Movement of Women ” have shaped our American norms and laws. Through education and careful organizing, they have risen to great heights. Some have influence through the media, others work effectively behind the scenes to shape policy. Vaughan’s installation includes 40 portraits in pastel of these successful women from present and past, letterpress print edition quotes, a data index box, a library, and archival materials collected by Vaughan over several years.

An installation of portraits, text art and objects will reflect their achievements.

Michelle Vaughan received her BFA at UCLA. Her art practice focuses on political or historical subjects. She examines topics and then deconstructs and reinterprets the material through work in a variety of media — drawing, installation, letterpress printing, among others. Vaughan has had solo shows at Dumbo Art Center and the South Street Seaport, where she was awarded fiscal sponsorship from the New York Foundation of the Arts for Sea Warriors: A Public Art Project, in 2009. During the summer of 2018, her ongoing project “Generations,” a deep dive into the degeneration by inbreeding of the Spanish Habsburgs, was shown in solo exhibitions at Galería Trinta and the Universidade Santiago de Compostela in Spain. Vaughan was born in Anaheim, California and lives in New York City.

For images of previous projects, the artist’s bio, etc, please visit:  
<https://www.michellevaughan.net/>

For exhibition info, to contact Theodore:Art, etc, please visit:  
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