



View of “A Manual for Saving Head,” 2019–20.

TORONTO

## Lili Huston-Herterich

ZALUCKY CONTEMPORARY

3044 Dundas St. W.

November 23, 2019–January 25, 2020

“Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain!” demands the voice of the Wizard of Oz, after he is exposed as merely a man behind a velvet curtain. Lili Huston-Herterich’s exhibition “A Manual for Saving Head” likewise plays with the dissonance between seeing and believing, the fabrication of spectacles.

A drawing of the show’s title, framed with a pewter-stained stretch of velvet, serves as a title card. Deeper within the gallery, a heavy red curtain hangs from the ceiling, landing just high enough off the ground to expose a pair of boots—made largely of lost gloves and socks—on the other side. A shirt sewn into the front of the curtain further the illusion of a body. Only by walking around the curtain can a visitor confirm that no person sports the shoes. The misplaced garments gesture toward the adage that our clothes help construct our sense of self, but they also sketch a portrait of loss. “People are losing their gloves like



crazy,” Huston-Herterich writes in the exhibition text. The people are gone; only their belongings remain.

Chromogenic prints hang on the walls surrounding the curtain. The vivid photograms are tinted blue, green, orange, and black, and depict layers of discarded objects—glass, scraps of metal, dental floss—that here resemble fossils. So heavily pigmented that they seem to glow, the works could be X-rays of objects lodged somewhere in a body. The images were built up in a color darkroom, forcing the artist to rely on touch to make her compositions. The resulting ghostly traces are not unlike the boots or the bodiless shirt: absences visualized.

A giant constellation-like weaving delivers the show’s finale. The design of the tufted piece is based on an image in a manual for braiding bread—a practical technique here applied to a disjointed medium. The rug is simultaneously domestic and celestial, familiar and strange, human and mystical.

— Tatum Dooley

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