

assembled from multiple sheets of paper. The modest scale of the single sheet allows for a private, almost diaristic way of working, in which images are created individually and only later joined on the wall, as seen in *Metamorfosis* (Metamorphosis) (2023). From the mouth of a brown-haired human head, a flowering stem emerges. Creatures rest along its meandering path, including a black butterfly, two purple blossoms with human-like facial features, and a caterpillar whose face is a skull. As its title suggests, life unfolds through different stages of transformation, change the only constant. This process of becoming something else, of birthing new life and witnessing growth, finds visual parallels in the rising smoke of mountain ranges in *Anillo de fuego* and in the newborn figure that surfaces in *Yemanjá*, where human life, the earth, and plant life converge into a unified whole. For these fantastical beings, and in many ways for those experiencing the dislocation of migration, there is no clear distinction between what they have been and what they are becoming; existence is understood as a continual state of flux.

Throughout ICA LA, and especially in the salon-style wall display that assembled 71 graphite drawings, a sense of accumulation became vividly apparent. Here, the artist's transnational experience was most visible through language: single words and short phrases appear in Spanish, German, and English. Within this arrangement of works, the 2009 eponymous drawing

bore the phrase "El pueblo unido jamás será vencido" (The people united will never be defeated), written beside a man holding a black flag much taller than the height of his own body, the work is perhaps a metaphor for the weight of revolutionary ideals. First voiced as a 1970s Chilean protest chant, the phrase has long exceeded its original context, circulating across Latin America and reappearing in English-language protest songs, banners, and ephemera.<sup>1</sup> Words, in this sense, are not bound to a single language, just as migrants are not constrained to a single place. In this process of exchange, migration follows a reciprocal logic, one in which individuals absorb the beliefs and customs of a foreign culture while simultaneously leaving lasting traces upon it, becoming jointly and inseparably transformed.

1. Alfredo Lopez, Jr., interview with Sandra Vásquez de la Horra, "Sandra Vásquez de la Horra: 'Soy médium desde niña,'" *Velvet*, November 18, 2025, <https://revistavelvet.cl/sandra-vasquez-de-la-horra-soy-medium-desde-nina/>.

2. Sergio Ortega, Quilapayún, "El pueblo unido jamás será vencido," *Marxists Internet Archive*, <https://www.marxists.org/subject/art/music/lyrics/es/el-pueblo.htm>.

## Beverly Semmes at Official Welcome

January 10–  
February 21, 2026

If you are familiar with Beverly Semmes's practice, you know that in the midst of encountering her work, you might encounter yourself. Traces of play, desire, and care were present in *Body*

*Shop*, her most recent exhibition at Official Welcome. Entering the gallery space I felt a sense of anticipation, as I was greeted by nine iterations of Semmes's humorously assembled works that resembled larger-than-life figures whose imposing presence make you aware of your own body. Soft and lush, some spanning several feet across, each assemblage was composed of painting, drawing, sculpture, textile, and photographic materials. Each one was absurdly pinned to the wall with T-pins that mapped out the shape of a torso. These bodies, or "bodices" as Semmes calls them, invite you to reorient, each holding their own offering as a gesture of transformation. Semmes's work has always beckoned me, transporting me to a place of feminist radical play where desire materializes, where bodies spill, slip, and fold onto each other through humor and care.

Semmes's practice is an ongoing investigation of the body, materiality, and the politics of form—one that moves fluidly between drawing, sculpture, and installation. Central to her process is the long-running series *FRP* (*Feminist Responsibility Project*), a drawing practice in which Semmes pulls images from *Penthouse* and fashion magazines to create collages that combine manipulated photographs, paint, and other materials. Alongside these works are other series, like her ceramic bodies and her daring "impossible garments," which occupy space in distinct yet related ways: The ceramics engage distance and depth with a grounded physicality, while

the garments reclaim form even as they allow meaning to slip.

In *Body Shop* (all works 2025), Semmes collapsed many of these mediums together to play with new constructs. Her mixed-media sculptural works queer both body and space, each a fluid conception of identity that ruptures stable form. In one work, *Nikie with Ugg*, an *FRP* painting featuring Nikie, a model from Semmes's collections of magazines who appears in many of her works, hangs stacked in a symmetrical composition over a single layer of pink tulle fabric roughly cut into the shape of a long sleeve-shirt. Flanked by a pair of red Ugg boots, Nikie is veiled by a layer of bright orange paint, limiting direct access, and yet her eyes invite you in. To the left, emerging from beneath a slipper, a drawing resembling Pac-Man's profile heads toward Nikie. By refusing fixed orientations and linear narratives, the assemblage creates conditions of slippage—where identity is continuously re-formed rather than resolved. In these works, Semmes plays with speed and labor, abutting luxury designer shoes made in factories with careful and immediate painting gestures and low-brow cultural references. As Semmes's use of humor destabilizes, desire emerges from overlapping materials, forms, and bodies. Semmes's assemblages play with our desire through their overlapping power relations, handled with humor and care. They invite us to listen with our whole bodies, proposing a feminist responsibility to the body becoming.

*Duck Slippers*, the largest work in the exhibition and installed in the far right corner of the gallery, drew attention to the window and, in turn, to the subtle features of the gallery's architecture. When I visited, afternoon light poured in, casting a reflection across the work's luscious brown fur that read almost like a portal. Sunlight, architecture, and Semmes's sculpture seemed caught in a quiet flirtation. In the piece, a large piece of brown textured faux fur—pinned to the wall high enough to resemble a window curtain—spilled down onto the floor and across the gallery floor, occupying nearly half the room's width. At the far edge of this cascade of fur with bird-like feather texture, was a swatch of red patterned fur which sat underneath an *FRP* painting. The painting again features Nikie, here obscured by a thick layer of light blue point (so only her heeled feet are visible) and a pair of luxury slippers embroidered with ducks, which sit atop the assemblage. In previous exhibitions, the cascade of brown fur in *Duck Slippers* has been installed alongside other works to more overtly resemble a figure. In one iteration, it occupied the position of a skirt while other works were installed above it to stand in for a torso. At Official Welcome, however, *Hat* (in which a brown fur hat is positioned at the center of a sea of pink velvet torso) and *Fur & Bit* (in which brown faux fur slippers sit where breasts would be within a caramel brown field of a torso) were installed in a line next to *Duck Slippers*, the implied figure being stretched out linearly across the gallery wall. Through Semmes's

playful installations, in which artworks are placed in various proximities to each other upon each installation, the artist plays with space and orientation, fluidity of identity and becoming. Together the works resist a single viewing position—moving from wall to floor, from vertical to horizontal. This shifting orientation asks the viewer to renegotiate their physical relationship to the work, and by extension, their own embodiment.

The assemblages, holding layers of Semmes's formal and conceptual languages, neither consume us nor ask to be consumed. Consumption, central to this body of work, is never satiated; the viewer is kept in the hold of desire. The slippages in meaning and embodiment within this new body of work asks us to play with the ways we inhabit form, space, language, identity, and other conceptual possibilities. By playing with spatial orientation, destabilizing bodily form, and layering through repetition and concealment, Semmes's work ruptures the expectation that identity and meaning-making unfolds in a linear, coherent way. Instead, identity is experienced as fluid, contingent, and continually in the process of forming.

**(L.A. in N.Y.)  
Vaginal Davis  
at MoMA PS1**

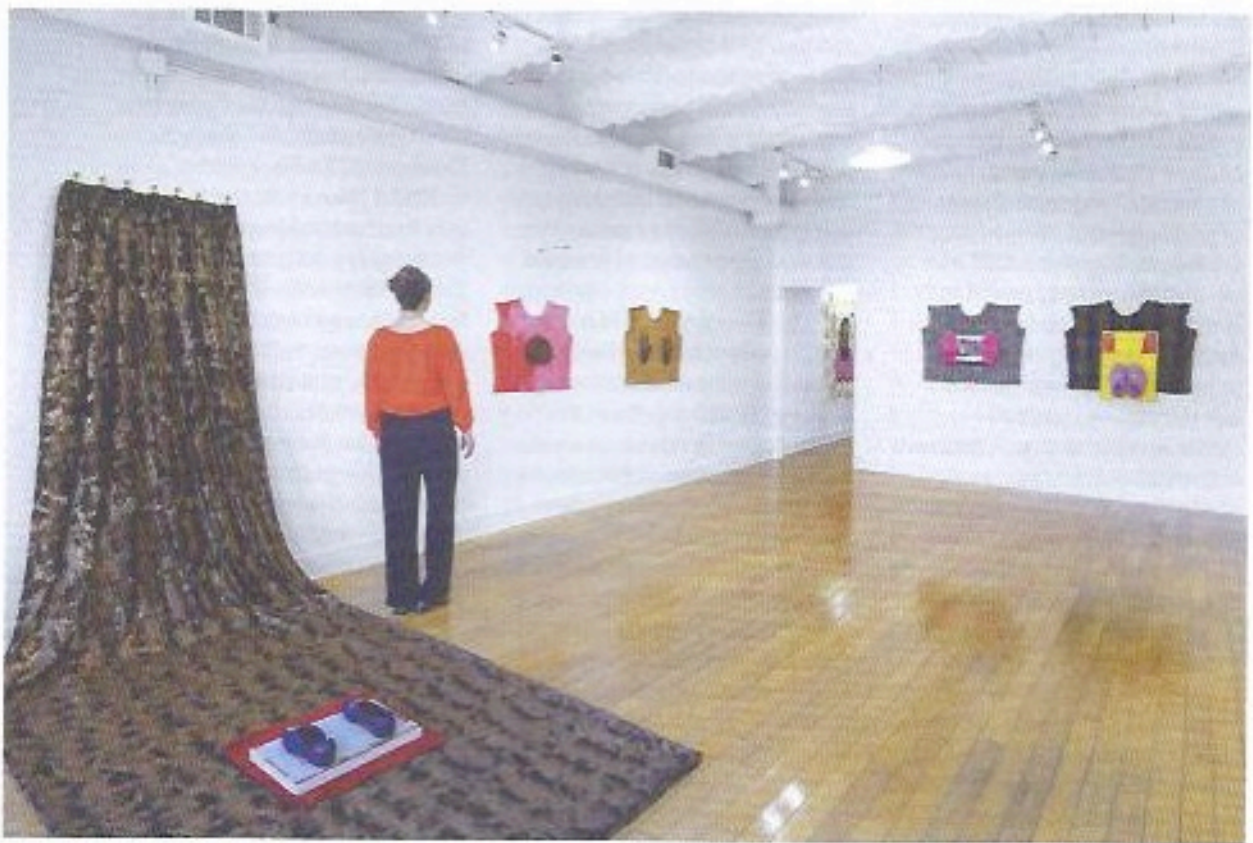
**October 9, 2025–  
March 2, 2026**

At the entrance of *Magnificent Product*, two vinyl eyes were stuck onto the doors that led into the first gallery. Even before entering, L.A.-born,

**Aaron Boehmer**



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Top: Beverly Semmes, *Nikie with Ugg* (2025).  
Tulle, painting on printed canvas, slippers,  
epoxy, 29 x 30 x 6 inches. Image courtesy of  
the artist and Official Welcome, Los Angeles.  
Photo: Evan Bedford.

Bottom: Beverly Semmes, *Body Shop*  
(installation view) (2026). Image courtesy  
of the artist and Official Welcome,  
Los Angeles. Photo: Evan Bedford.