About the Artist

Portia Munson is a visual artist who works in a variety of media including installation, painting, photography, and sculpture. Solo shows include exhibitions at PPOW Gallery, Yoshii Gallery and White Columns in New York City, among others. Her work has been exhibited throughout the US, Canada & Europe in such venues as the Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki, Finland; the Kunsthalle, Bruxelles Klædefabrik, Odense; Denmark; and in New York City at the New Museum, Ace Gallery, Erin Art, DC Moore Gallery and Affirmation Arts. Munson has taught at the Yale School of Art, Vassar College and SUNY Purchase. She holds a BFA from Cooper Union and an MFA from Rutgers University, and has received fellowships from Yaddo, MacDowell, Skowhegan, Fine Arts Work Center Provincetown, Art Omi, and others. Her work has been reviewed and written about in many publications including The New York Times, Art in America, Newsweek, Harper’s, USA Today, The New Yorker, Flash Art and Artforum. Munson lives in the Catskill Mountains of New York with her husband, Jared Handelsman, and their two children.

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The Pink & Blue Projects

explore how we are defined by the objects that we mass-produce, play with, wear away. Made up of thousands of inexpensive pink and blue products, the eye-popping installation gives dramatic form to what we think we know about gender, marketing, and consumption.

Consider the color-coding of the toy section in mainstream stores: there is no mistaking which aisles are meant for boys and which ones are for girls. The packaging and products themselves are clearly marked, branded with the identifying dominant pink or blue color. Girls are sold pink princesses, plastic play clothes, vacuums, tea sets, hair clips, dress-up hats and makeup, and baby dolls. Boys are sold superheroes, plastic work tools, trucks, shovels, toy guns, sports clothes, balls, and bats. Colors signal our identity. From the time we are born, pink or blue pacifiers are propped onto our mouths as gender markers. Babies are wrapped in pink or blue blankets, and dressed in pink or blue caps and sneakers. This color-coding remains with us to the grave with pink fake flower grave markers for Mom and blue ones for Dad. Portia Munson’s work invites us on a journey into the massive amounts of plastic in our own lives.

The Pink & Blue Projects

by Portia Munson

The Pink & Blue Projects

KIDS SPACE @ MASS MoCA

Painting I

by Portia Munson

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The Pink & Blue Projects

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Try completing these activities at home!

Consuming Colors
After viewing Portia Munson’s exhibition, take inventory of your own pink and blue objects. Count how many of each color can be found in just one room in your house.

HINT: WE SUGGEST A KITCHEN OR BEDROOM

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Consumption Break
Try living one day without:

- Viewing TV
- Spending money
- Texting
- Social networking

Note in a journal how it felt to disconnect. Could you do this for more than one day? Would it be easier to disconnect on a particular day of the week?

Pink & Blue Phrases
On another sheet of paper, draw pictures illustrating some of these phrases:

- Pretty in pink
- Tickled pink
- In the pink
- True blue
- Blue plate special
- Blue streak
- Blue in the face
- Pink slip
- Pink elephants
- Once in a blue moon
- Pink Child & Blue Child

After viewing Portia Munson’s exhibition, take inventory of your own pink and blue objects. Count how many of each color can be found in just one room in your house.

**Hint:** We suggest a kitchen or bedroom.

**Knitting:** Pink yarn and muscle men, 2000-2010.

**Pink Child & Blue Child:** Found pink and blue objects, steel frame cases, 2010.